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PERLYCROSS.

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CHAPTER XXXVI.

A FIGHTING BOUT.

AFTER that mighty crash everybody with any sense left in his head went home. There was more to talk about than Perlycross had come across in half a century. And the worst of it was that every blessed man had his own troubles first to attend to ; which is no fun at all, though his neighbours' are so pleasant. The Fair in the covered market-place had long been a dreary concern, contending vainly against the stronger charm of the wrestling-booth, and still more vainly against the furious weather. Even the biggest and best fed flares (and they were quite as brisk in those days as they are now), gifted though they might be with rage and vigour, lost all self-control and dashed in yellow forks, here, there, and everywhere, singeing sometimes their own author's whiskers. Like a man who lives too fast, they killed themselves ; and the poor Cheap-jacks, the Universal Oracles, the Benevolent Bountymen chucking guineas right and left, the Master of Cupid's bower, who supplied every lass with a lord and every lad with a lady having a lapful of a hundred thousand pounds,—sadly they all strapped up, and lit their pipes, and shivered at that terrible tramp before them, cursing the weather, and their wives, and even the hallowed village of Perlycross.

Though the coaches had forsaken this ancient track from Exeter to London, and followed the broader turn-

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pike roads, there still used to be every now and then a string of pack-horses, or an old stage-waggon, not afraid of hills and making no fuss about time, but straggling at leisure through the pristine thoroughfares thwarted less with toll-bars. Notably, old Hill's *God-be-with-us* van left Exeter on Tuesdays, with the goodwill of three horses, some few hours in the afternoon, and might be trusted to appear at Perlycross according to the weather and condition of the roads. What more comfortable course of travel could there be for any one who understood it, and enjoyed sound sleep and a good glass of ale at intervals, with room enough to dine inside if he thought fit, than the *God-be-with-us* van afforded ? For old Hill was always in charge of it himself, and expected no more than a penny a mile, and perhaps the power to drink the good health of any peaceful subject of the King, who might be inclined to come along with him and listen to his moving tales. The horses were fat, and they rested at night, and took it easily in the daytime ; and the leader had three little bells on his neck, looking, when you sat behind him, like a pair of scales ; and without them he always declined to take a step, and the wheelers backed him up in that denial. For a man not bound to any domineering hour, or even to a self-important day, the broad-wheeled waggon belonging to old Hill ("Old-as-the-Hills" some flippant youngers called him) was as good an engine as need be for crossing of the

country when it wanted to be crossed, and halting at any town or hospitable turn.

The same Shrove-Tuesday (and it is well to mark the day, because Master Hill was so superior to dates) this man, who asserted the dignity of our race by not allowing matter to distract him, was coming down hill with his heavy drag on, in a road that was soft from the goodness of the soil, when a man with two legs made of better stuff than ours, either came out of a gate across the van, or else fairly walked it down by superior speed behind. "Ship ahoy!" he shouted; and old Hill was wide awake, for he had two or three barrels that would keep rolling into the small of his back (as he called it, with his usual oblivion of chronology), and so he was enabled to discern this man, and begin at his leisure to consider him.

If the man had shouted again, or shown any other symptom of small hurry, the driver (or properly speaking the drifter, for the horses did their own driving,) would have felt some disappointment in him as an inferior fellow-creature. But the man on foot, or at least on stumps, was in no more hurry than old Hill himself, and steadfastly trudged to the bottom of the hill, looking only at the horses, —a very fine sign.

The land being Devon, it is needless to say that there was no inconsistency about it. Wherever one hill ends, there another begins, with just room enough between them for a horse to spread his legs and shake himself with self-approbation. And he is pretty sure to find a crystal brook, purling across the road and twinkling bright temptation to him.

"Hook up skid, and then 'e can jump in," said old Hill in the hollow where the horses backed; and he knew by the clank that it had been done, and then by a rattle on the floor behind him that the stranger had embarked by the chains at the rear. After about a mile or so of soft low whistling, in which he excelled all carriers, old Hill turned round with a pleasant grin, for there was a great

deal of good about him. "Going far?" he asked, as an opening of politeness rather than of curiosity.

"Zort of a place called Perlycrass," replied the wooden-legged man, who was sitting on a barrel. Manifestly an ancient sailor, weather-beaten and taciturn, the residue of a strong and handsome man.

The whole of this had been as nearly to the carrier's liking as the words and deeds of any man can be to any other's. Therefore before another mile had been travelled old Hill turned round again, with a grin still sweeter. "Pancake day, bain't it?" was his very kind inquiry.

"B'lieve it be," replied the other, in the best and truest British style. After this no more was lacking to secure old Hill's regard than the very thing the sailor did. There was a little flap of canvas, like a loophole in the tilt, fitted for the use of chawers and the cleanliness of the floor. Timberlegs, after using this with much deliberation and great skill, made his way forward, and in deep silence poked old Hill with his open tobacco-box. If it were not silver it was quite as good to look at and as bright as if it held the freedom of the City; the tobacco, moreover, was of goodly reek, and a promise of inspiration such as never flows through custom-house.

"Thank 'e, I'll have a blade bumbai. Will 'e zit upon that rope of onions?" The sailor shook his head; for the rim of a barrel, though apt to cut, cuts evenly like a good schoolmaster.

"Long of Nelson?" Master Hill inquired pointing to the places where the feet were now of deputy.

The old Tar nodded; and then with that sensitive love of accuracy which marks the Tar, growled out, "Leastways, wan of them."

"And what come to t'other wan?" Master Hill was capable of really large human interest.

"Had 'un off, to square the spars, and for sake of vamily." He had no desire to pursue the subject, and closed it by a big squirt through the flap.

Old Hill nodded with manly approbation. Plymouth was his birthplace; and he knew that other sons of Nelson had done this; for it balanced their bodies, and composed their minds with another five shillings a week for life, and the sale of the leg covered all expenses.

"You'm a very ingenious man;" he glanced, as he spoke, at the sailor's jury-rig. "I'll war'n no doctor could a' vitted 'e up like thiccy."

"Vitted 'un myself with double swivel. Can make four knots an hour now. They doctors can undo 'e, but 'em can't do 'e up. A cove can't make sail upon a truck-head."

"And what do 'e say to the weather, cap'n?" Master Hill inquired of his passenger, when a few more compliments had passed, and the manes of the horses began to ruffle, and the tilt to sway and rattle with the waxing storm.

"Think us shall have as big a gale of wind as ever come out of the heavens," the sailor replied, after stumping to the tail of the van, and gazing windwards. "Heave to pretty smart, and make all snug afore sunset, is my advice. Too much sail on this here little craft for such a blow as us shall have to-night."

"Can't stop short of Taunton town." Old Hill was famed for his obstinacy.

"Can 'e take in sail? Can 'e dowsse this here canvas? Can 'e reef it then somehow?" The old man shook his head. "Tell 'e what then, shipmate, if 'e carry on for six hours more, this here craft will be on her beam-ends, wi'out mainsail parteth from his lashings, sure as my name is Dick Herniman."

This Tar of the old school, better known as "Timber-legged Dick," disembarked from the craft, whose wreck he had thus predicted, at a turning betwixt Perliton and Perlycross, and stumped away up a narrow lane at a pace quite equal to that of the *God-be-with-us* van. The horses looked after him, as a specimen of biped hitherto beyond their experience; and old Hill himself, though incapable of amazement (which is a

rapid process), confessed that there were some advantages in this form of human pedal, as well as fine economy of cloth and leather. "How 'a doth get along, nimble nor I could!" the carrier reflected, as his nags drove on again. "Up to zummat ratchety, I'll be bound he be now. A leary old sort as ever lived. Never laughed once, never showed a smile, but gotten it all in his eyes, he have; and the eyes be truer folks than the lips. Enough a'most to tempt a man to cut off 's own two legs."

Some hours later than this, and one hour later than the downfall of the wrestler's roof, the long market-place, forming one side of the street, a low narrow building set against the churchyard wall between the school and the lych-gate, looked as dismal and dreary and deserted as the bitterest enemy of Fairs could wish. The torrents of rain and fury of the wind had driven all pleasure-seekers, in a grievously drenched and battered plight, to seek for wiser comfort; and only a dozen or so of poor creatures, either too tipsy to battle with the wind or too reckless in their rags to care where they were, wallowed upon sacks, and scrabbled under the stanchion-boards, where the gaiety had been. The main gates, buckled back upon their heavy hinges, were allowed to do nothing in their proper line of business until the church-clock should strike twelve, for such was the usage; though as usual nobody had ever heard who ordained it. A few oil-lamps were still in their duty, swinging like welted horn-poppies in the draught, and shedding a pale and spluttering light.

The man who bore the keys had gone home three times, keeping under heel with his oil-skins on, to ask his wife (who was a woman of some mark) whether he might not lock the gates, and come home and have his bit of bacon. But she having strong sense of duty, and a good log blazing, and her cup of tea, had allowed him very generously to warm his hands a little, and then begged him to think of his family. This was the main thing that

he had to do ; and he went forth again into the dark to do it.

Meanwhile, without anybody to take heed (for the sergeant, ever vigilant, was now on guard in Spain), a small but choice company of human beings was preparing for action in the old school-porch, which stood at the back of the building. Staffs they had, and handcuffs too, and supple straps, and loops of cord ; all being men of some learning in the law, and the crooked ways of people out of harmony therewith. If there had been light enough to understand a smile, they would have smiled at one another, so positive were they that they had an easy job, and so grudgeful that the money should cut up so small. The two worthy constables of Perlycross felt certain that they could do it better by themselves, and the four invoked from Perliton were vexed to have to act with village lubbers. Their orders were not to go nigh the wrestling, or show themselves inside the market-place, but to keep themselves quiet, and shun the weather, and, what was a great deal worse, the beer. Every now and then the ideas of jolly noises, such as were appropriate to the time, were borne upon the rollicking wings of the wind into their silent vestibule, suggesting some wiping of lips which, alas, were ever so much too dry already. At a certain signal they were all to hasten across the corner of the churchyard at the back of the market-place, and enter a private door at the east end of the building, after passing through the lych-gate.

Suddenly the rain ceased, as if at sound of trumpet ; like the mouth of a cavern the sky flew open, and the wind, leaping three points of the compass, rushed upon the world from the chambers of the west. Such a blast as had never been felt before filled the whole valley of the Perle, and flung mowstack and oakwood, farmhouse and abbey, under the sweep of its wings as it flew. The roar of the air over-powered the crush of the ruin it made, and left no man the sound of

his own voice to himself. These great swoops of wind always lighten the sky ; and as soon as the people blown down could get up, they were able to see the church-tower still upright, though many men swore that they heard it go rock. Very likely it rocked, but could they have heard it ?

In the thick of the din of this awful night, when the church-clock struck only five instead of ten (and it might have struck fifty without being heard), three men managed, one by one, and without any view of one another, to creep along the creases of the storm, and gain the gloomy shelter of the market-place. "Every man for himself" is the universal law, when the heavens are against the whole race of us. Not one of these men cared to ask about the condition of the other two, nor even expected much to see them, though each was more resolute to be there himself, because of its being so difficult.

"Very little chance of Timberlegs to-night," said one to another, as two of them stood in deep shadow against the back wall, where a voice could be heard if pitched in the right direction ; "he could never make way again' a starm like this."

"Thou bee'st a liar," replied a gruff voice, as the clank of metal on the stone was heard. "Timberlegs can goo where flesh and bone be mollichops." He carried a staff like a long handspike, and prodded the biped on his needless feet, to make him wish to be relieved of them.

"Us be all here now," said the third man, who seemed in the wavering gloom to fill half the place. "What hast thou brought us for, Timber-legged Dick ?"

"Bit of a job, same as three months back. Better than clam-pits, worn't it now ? Got a good offer for thee too, Harvey, for that old ramshackle place. Handy hole for a louderin' job, and not far from them clam-pits."

"Ay, so a' be ; never thought of that. And must have another coney, now they wise 'uns have vound out Nigger's Nock. Lor', what a laugh

we had, Jem and I, at they fules of Perlycress ! ”

“ Then Perlycross will have the laugh at thee. Harvey Tremlett, and James Kettel, I arrest ‘ e both, in the name of his Majesty the King.”

Six able-bodied men (who had entered unheard in the roar of the gale and unseen in the gloom) stood with drawn staffs, heels together and shoulder to shoulder, in a semi-circle enclosing the three conspirators.

“ Read thy warrant aloud,” said Dick Herniman, striking his handspike upon the stones, and taking command in right of intellect ; while the other twain laid their backs against the wall, and held themselves ready for the issue.

Dick had hit a very hard nail on the head. None of these constables had been young enough to undergo Sergeant Jakes, and thenceforth defy the most lofty examiner. “ Didn’t hear what ‘ e zed,” replied the head-constable, making excuse of the wind, which had blown him but little of the elements. But he lowered his staff and held consultation.

“ Then I zay it again,” shouted Timber-legged Dick, stumping forth with a power of learning, for he had picked up good leisure in hospitals ; “ if thou representest the King, read his Majesty’s words afore taking his name in vain.”

These six men were ready, and resolute enough, to meet any bodily conflict ; but the literary crisis scared them. “ Can ‘ e do it, Jack ? ” “ Don’t know as I can.” “ Wish my boy Bill was here.” “ Don’t run in my line,” —and so on.

“ If none on ‘ e knows what he be about,” said the man with the best legs to stand upon, advancing into the midst of them, “ I know a deal of the law ; and I tell ‘ e, as a friend of the King, who hath lost two legs for ‘ un in the Royal Navy, there can’t be no lawful arrest made here. And the liberty of the subject cometh in, the same as a doth again’ highwaymen. Harvey Tremlett, and Jem Kettel,

the law be on your side, to ‘ protect the liberty of the subject.’ ”

This was enough for the pair who had stood, as law-abiding Englishmen, against the wall, with their big fists doubled and their great hearts doubting. “ Here goo’th for the liberty of the subject,” cried Harvey Tremlett, striding forth. “ I sha’n’t strike none as don’t strike me ; but if a doth, a must look out.”

The constables wavered, in fear of the law and doubt of their own duty ; for they had often heard that every man had a right to know what he was arrested for. Unluckily one of them made a blow with his staff at Harvey Tremlett ; then he dropped on the flags with a clump in his ear, and the fight in a moment was raging. Somebody knocked Jemmy Kettel on the head, as being more easy to deal with ; and then the blood of the big man rose. Three stout fellows fell upon him all together, and heavy blows rung on the drum of his chest from truncheons plied like wheel-spokes. Forth flew his fist-clubs right and left, one of them meeting a staff in the air and shattering it back into its owner’s face. Never was the peace of the King more broken ; no man could see what became of his blows, legs and arms went about like windmills, substance and shadow were all as one, till the substance rolled upon the ground and groaned. This dark fight resembled the clashing of a hedgerow in the fury of a midnight storm ; when the wind has got in and cannot get out, when ground-ash and sycamore, pole, stub, and sapling, are dashing and whirling against one another, and even the sturdy oak-tree in the trough is swaying, and creaking, and swinging on its bole.

“ Zoonder not to kill e’er a wan of ‘ e, I ‘ ood ; but by the Lord, if ‘ e comes they byses,” shouted Harvey Tremlett, as a rope was thrown over his head from behind, but cut in half a second by Herniman. “ More of ‘ e be there ? ” as the figures thickened. “ Have at ‘ e then, wi’ zummat more harder nor visties be ! ” He wrenched

from a constable his staff, and strode onward, being already near the main gate now. As he whirled the heavy truncheon round his head, the constables hung back, having two already wounded, and one in the grip of reviving Jem who was rolling on the floor with him. "Zurrender to his Majesty," they called out, preferring the voluntary system. "A varden for the lot of 'e!" the big man said, and he marched in a manner that presented it.

But not so did he walk off, blameless and respectable. He had kept his temper wonderfully, believing the law to be on his side after all he had done for the county. Now his nature was pressed a little too hard for itself, when just as he had called out, "Coom along, Jem; there be nort to stop 'e, Timberlegs," retiring his forces with honour,—two figures, hitherto out of the moil, stood across him at the mouth of exit. "Who be you?" he asked, with his anger in a flame; for they showed neither staff of the King nor warrant. "Volunteers, be 'e? Have a care what be about."

"Harvey Tremlett, here you stop," said a tall man, square in front of him. But luckily for his life the lift of the sky showed that his hair was silvery.

"Never hits an old man, you lie there." Tremlett took him with his left hand, and laid him on the stones. But meanwhile the other flung his arms around his waist. "Wult have a zettler? Then thee shall," cried the big man, tearing him out like a child and swinging his truncheon for to knock him on the head, and Jemmy Fox felt that his time was come. Down came the truncheon like a paviour's rammer, and brains would have weltered on the floor like suds, but a stout arm dashed across and received the crash descending. "Pumpkins!" cried the smiter, wondering much what he had smitten, as two bodies rolled between his legs and on the stones. "Coom along, Jemmy boy; nare a wan to stop 'e." The remnant of the constables upon their

legs fell back. The Lord was against them; they had done their best. The next job for them was to heal their wounds, and get an allowance for them if they could.

Now the human noise was over, but the wind roared on, and the rushing of the clouds let the stars look down again. Tremlett stood victorious in the middle of the gateway. Hurry was a state of mind beyond his understanding. Was everybody satisfied? Well, no one came for more. He took an observation of the weather, and turned round. "Sha'n't bide here no longer," he announced. "Dick, us'll vanish up our clack to my place. Rain be droud up, and I be off."

"No, Harvey Tremlett, you will not be off. You will stay here like a man, and stand your trial." Mr. Penniloe's hand was upon his shoulder, and the light of the stars, thrown in vaporous waves, showed the pale face firmly regarding him.

"Well, and if I says no to it, what can 'e do?"

"Hold you by the collar, as my duty is." The parson set his teeth, and his delicate white fingers tightened their not very formidable grasp.

"Sesh!" said the big man with a whistle, and making as if he could not move. "When a man be baten, a' must gie in. Wun't 'e let me goo, Passon? Do 'e let me goo."

"Tremlett, my duty is to hold you fast. I owe it to a dear friend of mine, as well as to my parish."

"Well, you be a braver man than most of 'em I zimmeth. But do 'e tell a poor chap, as have no chance at all wi' 'e, what a' hath dooed to be lawed for 'un so crule now?"

"Prisoner, as if you did not know. You are charged with breaking open Colonel Waldron's grave and carrying off his body."

"Oh Lord! Oh Lord in heaven!" shouted Harvey Tremlett. "Jem Kettel, hark to thiccy! Timberlegs, do 'e hear thic? All they blessed constables, as has got their bellyful, and ever so many wise gen'lemen too, what do 'e think 'em be arter us for

Arter us for resurrectioneering ! Never heered tell such a joke in all my life. They hosebirds to *Ivy-bush* cries ‘Carnwall for ever !’ But I’m blest if I don’t cry out ‘Perlycross for ever !’ Oh, Lord ! Oh, Lord ! Was there ever such a joke ? Don’t ‘e hold me, sir, for half a minute, just while I has out my laugh,—fear I should be too heavy for ‘e.”

Timber-legged Dick came up to his side, and not being of the laughing kind, made up for it by a little hornpipe in the lee, his metal feet striking from the flints pitched there sparks enough to light a dozen pipes ; while Kettel, though damaged severely about the mouth, was still able to compass a broad and loud guffaw.

“Prisoners,” Mr. Penniloe said severely, for he disliked the ridicule of his parish, “this is not at all a matter to be laughed at. The evidence against you is very strong, I fear.”

“Zurrender, zurrender, to his Majesty the King !” cried Tremlett, being never much at argument. ‘Constables, if ‘ee can goo, take charge. But I ‘ont have no handcuffs, mind ! Wudn’t a gie’d ‘ee a clout if I had knawed it. Zarve ‘ee right though, for not rading of thic warrant-papper. Jemmy, boy, you zurrender to the King, and I be Passon’s prisoner. Honour bright fust though ; nort to come agin’ us, unless a be zet down in warrant-papper. Passon, thee must gie thy word for that. Timberlegs, coom along for layyer.”

“Certainly, I give my word, as far as it will go, that no other charge shall be brought against you. The warrant is issued for that crime only. Prove yourselves guiltless of that, and you are free.”

“Us won’t be very long in prison then. A day or two bain’t much odds to we.”

CHAPTER XXXVII.

GENTLE AS A LAMB.

OF the nine people wounded in that Agoräic struggle, which cast expiring

lustre on the Fairs of Perlycross, every one found his case most serious to himself, and still more so to his wife, and even solemn in the presence of those who had to settle compensation. Herniman had done some execution, as well as received a nasty splinter of one leg which broke down after his hornpipe ; and Kettel had mauled the man who rolled over with him. But, as appeared when the case was heard, Tremlett had by no means done his best ; and his lawyer put it touchingly and with great effect, that he was loth to smite the sons of his native county when he had just redeemed their glory by noble discomfiture of Cornwall.

One man only had a parlous wound ; and as is generally ordained in human matters, this was the one most impartial of all, the one who had no interest of his own to serve, the one who was present simply out of pure benevolence and a Briton’s love of order. So at least his mother said ; and every one acknowledged that she was a woman of high reasoning powers. Many others felt for him, as who would have done the same with like opportunity. For only let a healthy, strong, and earnest-minded Englishman (to use a beloved compound epithet of the day) hear of a hot and lawful fight impending, with people involved in it of whom he has some knowledge, and we may trust him heartily to be there or thereabouts to see, as he puts it to his conscience, fair play. But an if he chance to be in love just then, with a very large percentage of despair to reckon up, and one of the combatants is in the count against him, can a doubt remain of his eager punctuality ? This was poor Frank Gilham’s case. Dr. Gronow was a prudent man, and liked to have the legions on his side. He perceived that young Frank was a staunch and stalwart fellow, sure to strike a good blow on a friend’s behalf. He was well aware also of his love for Christie, and could not see why it should come to nothing. While

Jemmy Fox's faith in the resources of the law, and in his own prowess as a power in reserve, were not so convincing to the elder mind. "Better make sure than be too certain," was a favourite maxim of this shrewd old stager; and so without Jemmy's knowledge he invited Frank, to keep out of sight unless wanted.

This measure saved the life of Dr. Fox, and that of Harvey Tremlett too, some of whose brothers had adorned the gallows. Even as it was, Jemmy Fox lay stunned, with the other man's arm much inserted in his hat. Where he would have been without that buffer, the cherub who sits on the chimney-pots of Harley Street alone can say. Happily the other doctor was unhurt, and left in full possession of his wits, which he at once exerted. After examining the wounded yeoman, who had fainted from the pain and shock, he borrowed a mattress from the rectory, a spring-cart and truss of hay from Channing the baker, and various other appliances; and thus in spite of the storm conveyed both patients to hospital. This was the Old Barn itself, because all surgical needs would be forthcoming there more readily, and so it was wiser to decline Mr. Penniloe's offer of the rectory.

With the jolting of the cart, and the freshness of the air, Fox began to revive ere long; and though still very weak and dizzy, was able to be of some service at his own dwelling-place; and although he might not, when this matter first arose, have shown all the gratitude which the sanguine do expect, in return for Frank Gilham's loyalty, he felt very deep contrition now when he saw this frightful fracture and found his own head quite uncracked.

The six constables, though they had some black eyes, bruised limbs, and broken noses, and other sources of regret, were (in strict matter of fact, and without any view to compensation,) quite as well as could be expected. And, as happens too often, the one who groaned the most had the

least occasion for it. It was only the wick of a lamp that had dropped, without going out, on this man's collar, and burned a little hole in his *niddick*, as it used to be called in Devonshire.

Tremlett readily gave his word that no escape should be attempted; and when Mrs. Muggridge came to know that this was the man who had saved her master, nothing could be too good for him. So constables and prisoners were fed and cared for, and stowed for the night in the long schoolroom, with hailstones hopping in the fireplace.

In the morning the weather was worse again; for this was a double-barrelled gale, as an ignorant man might term it, or rather perhaps two several gales, arising from some vast disturbance and hitting into one another. Otherwise, why should it be known and remembered even to the present day as the great Ash-Wednesday gale although it began on Shrove-Tuesday, and in many parts raged most fiercely then? At Perlycross certainly there was no such blast upon the second day as that which swept the abbey down, when the wind leaped suddenly to the west and the sky fell open, as above observed.

Upon that wild Ash-Wednesday forenoon the curate stood in the churchyard, mourning even more than the melancholy date requires. Where the old abbey had stood for ages (backing up the venerable church with grand dark-robed solemnity, and lifting the buckler of ancient faith above many a sleeping patriarch,) there was nothing but a hideous gap with murky clouds galloping over it. Shorn of its ivy curtain by the tempest of last Sunday, the mighty frame had reeled, and staggered, and with one crash gone to ground last night, before the impetuous welkin's weight. "Is all I do to be always vain, and worse than vain, destructive, hurtful, baneful, fatal, I might say, to the very objects for which I strive? Here is the church, unfinished, leaky, with one of its corners gone underground,

and the grand stone screen smashed in two ; here is the abbey, or alas not here, but only an ugly pile of stones ! Here is the outrage to my dear friend, and the shame to the parish as black as ever ; for those men clearly know nothing of it. And here, or at any rate close at hand, the sad drawback upon all good works ; for at Lady-day in pour the bills, and my prayers (however earnest) will not pay them. It has pleased the Lord, in His infinite wisdom, to leave me very short of cash." Unhappily his best hat had been spoiled in that interview with the four vergers ; and in his humility he was not sure that the one on his head was good enough even to go to the Communion service. However it need not have felt unworthy ; for there was not a soul in the church to be adjured, save that which had been under its own brim. The clerk was off for Perliton, swearing (even at his time of life !) that he had been subpoenaed, as if that could be on such occasion ; and as for the pupils, all bound to be in church, the Hopper had been ordered by the constables to present himself to the magistrates (though all the constables denied it), and Pike and Mopuss felt it their duty to go with him.

In a word, all Perlycross was off, though services of the Church had not yet attained their present continuity ; and though every woman, and even man, had to plod three wet miles, with the head on the chest, in the teeth of the gale up the river. How they should get into the room when there was a question that never occurred to them. There they all yearned to be ; and the main part, who could not raise a shilling, or prove themselves uncles, or aunts, or former sweethearts of the two constables who kept the door, had to crouch under dripping shrubs outside the windows, and spoiled all Squire Mockham's young crocuses.

That gentleman was so upright and thoroughly impartial, that to counteract his own predilections for a champion wrestler, he had begged a

brother magistrate to come and sit with him on this occasion ; not Sir Edwin Sanford, who was of the Quorum for Somerset, but a man of some learning and high esteem, the well-known Dr. Morshead. Thus there would be less temptation for any tattler to cry, "hole and corner," as spiteful folk rejoice to do, while keeping in that same place themselves ; although there was less perhaps of mischief-making in those days than now, and there could be no more.

The constables marched in, with puff and blow, like victors over rebels, and as if they had carried the prisoners captive every yard of the way from Perlycross. All of them began to talk at once, and to describe with more vigour than truth the conflict of the night before. But Dr. Morshead stopped them short, for the question of resistance was not yet raised. What the Bench had first to decide was whether a case could be made out for a *mittimus*, in pursuance of the warrant, to the next Petty Sessions on Monday ; whence the prisoners would be remitted probably to the Quarter Sessions.

The two accused stood side by side, peaceful and decorous, as if they were accustomed to it, and without any trepidation admitted their identity. It was rather against their interests that the official clerk was absent (this not being a stated meeting, but held for special purpose), for magistrates used to be a little nervous without their proper adviser ; and in fear of permitting the guilty to escape, they sometimes remanded upon insufficient grounds. In the present case, there was nothing whatever to connect these two men with the crime, except the testimony of Joe Crang, and what might be regarded as their own admission overheard by Dr. Fox. The latter was not in court, nor likely so to be ; and as for the blacksmith's evidence, however positive it might be, what did it amount to ? And such as it was, it was torn to rags through the quaking of the deponent.

For a sharp little lawyer started

up, as lawyers are sure to do everywhere, and crossed the room to where Herniman sat, drumming the floor with metallic power and looking very stolid. But a glance had convinced the keen attorney that here were the brains of the party, and a few short whispers settled it. "Guinea, if 'e gets 'em off; if not, ne'er a farden." "Right!" said the lawyer, and announced himself. "Blickson, for the defence, your Worships—Maurice Blickson of Silverton." The proper bows were interchanged, and then came Crang's excruciation. Already this sturdy and very honest fellow was, as he elegantly described it, in a "lantern-sweat" of terror. It is one thing to tell a tale to two friends in a potato-field, and another to narrate the same on oath, with four or five quills making unknown strides, two most worshipful signors bending brows of doubt upon you, and thirty or forty faces scowling at every word. "What a liar you be!" And when on the top of all this stands up a noble gentleman, with keen eyes, peremptory voice, contemptuous smiles, and angry gestures, all expressing his Christian sorrow that the devil should have so got hold of you, —what blacksmith, even of poetic anvil (whence all rhythm and metre spring), can have any breath left in his own bellows?

Joe Crang had fallen on his knees to take the oath, as witnesses did, from a holy belief that this turned the rungs of the gallows the wrong way; and then he had told his little tale most sadly, as one who hopes never to be told of it again. His business had thriven, while his health was undermined, through the scores of good people who could rout up so much as a knife that wanted a rivet, or even a boy with one tooth pushing up another; and though none of them paid more than fourpence for things that would last them a fortnight to talk about, their money stayed under the thatch, while Joe spent nothing but a wink for all his beer. But ah, this was no winking-

time! Crang was beginning to shuffle off, with his knuckles to his forehead, and recovering his mind so loudly that he got in a word about the quality of his iron (which for the rest of his life he would have cited, to show how he beat they Justices), when he found himself recalled and told to put his feet together. This, from long practise of his art, had become a difficulty to him, and in labouring to do it he lost all possibility of bringing his wits into the like position. This order showed Blickson to be almost a Verulam in his knowledge of mankind. Joe Crang recovered no self-possession, on his own side of better than a gallon strong. "Blacksmith, what o'clock is it now?" Crang put his ears up, as if he expected the church-clock to come to his aid; and then with a rally of what he was hoping for, as soon as he got round the corner, replied, "Four and a half, your honour."

"I need not remind your Worships," said Blickson, when the laughter had subsided, "that this fellow's evidence, even if correct, proves nothing whatever against my clients. But just to show what it is worth, I will, with your Worships' permission, put a simple question to him. He has sworn that it was two o'clock on a foggy morning, and with no church-clock to help him, when he saw in his night-mare this ghostly vision. Perhaps he should have said, 'four and a half', which in broad daylight is his idea of the present hour. Now, my poor fellow, did you swear, or did you not, on a previous occasion that one of the men who so terrified you out of your heavy sleep, was Dr. James Fox,—a gentleman, Dr. Morshead, of your own distinguished profession. Don't shuffle with your feet, Crang, nor yet with your tongue. Did you swear that, or did you not?"

"Well, if I did, twadn't arkerate."

"In plain English, you perjured yourself on that occasion. And yet you expect their Worships to believe you now! Now look at the other

man, the tall one. By which of his features do you recognise him now, at four and a half in the morning?"

"Dun'now what veitchers be. Knows 'un by his size, and manner of standin'. Should like to hear 's voice, if no object to you, layyer."

"My friend, you call me by your own name. Such is your confusion of ideas. Will your Worships allow me to assist this poor numskull? The great Cornish wrestler is here, led by that noble fraternal feeling which is such a credit to all men distinguished in any walk of life. Mr. Polwarth of Bodmin, will you kindly stand by the side of your brother in a very noble art?"

It was worth a long journey in bad weather (as Squire Mockham told his guests at his dinner-party afterwards, and Dr. Morshead and his son confirmed it,) to see the two biggest growths of Devonshire and of Cornwall standing thus amicably side by side, smiling a little slyly at each other, and blinking at their Worships with some abashment, as if to say, "This is not quite in our line." For a moment the audience forgot itself, and made itself audible with three loud cheers. "Silence!" cried their Worships, but not so very sternly. "Reckon, I could draw 'e next time," said Cornwall. "Wun't zay but what 'e maight," answered Devon courteously.

"Now, little blacksmith," resumed the lawyer, though Joe Crang was considerably bigger than himself, "will you undertake to swear, upon your hope of salvation, which of those two gentlemen you saw that night?"

Joe Crang stared at the two big men, and his mind gave way within him. He was dressed in his best, and his wife had polished up his cheeks and nose with yellow soap, which gleamed across his vision with a kind of glaze, and therein danced pen, ink, and paper, the figures of the big men, the faces of their Worships, and his own hopes of salvation. "Maight 'a been Carnisher," he began to stammer, with a desire to gratify his county;

but a hiss went round the room from Devonian sense of justice; and to strike a better balance, he finished in despair,—"Wull then, it waz both on 'em."

"Stand down, sir!" Dr. Morshead shouted sternly, while Blickson went through a little panorama of righteous astonishment and disgust. All the audience roared, and a solid farmer called out, "Don't come near me, you infernal liar!" as poor Crang sought shelter behind his top-coat. So much for honesty, simplicity, and candour, when the nervous system has broken down!

"After that, I should simply insult the intelligence of your Worships," continued the triumphant lawyer, "by proceeding to address you. Perhaps I should ask you to commit that wretch for perjury; but I leave him to his conscience, if he has one."

"The case is dismissed," Dr. Morshead announced, after speaking for a moment to his colleagues; "unless there is any intention to charge these men with resisting or assaulting officers in the execution of their warrant. It has been reported, though not formally, that some bystander was considerably injured. If any charge is entered on either behalf, we are ready to receive the depositions."

The constables, who had been knocked about, were beginning to consult together, when Blickson slipped among them, after whispering to Herniman, and a good deal of nodding of heads took place, while pleasant ideas were interchanged, such as, "Handsome private compensation,"—"Twenty-five pounds to receive tonight, and such men are always generous,"—"A magnificent supper-party at the least, if they are free; if not, all must come to nothing." The worthy custodians (now represented by a still worthier body and one of still finer feeling) perceived the full value of these arguments; and luckily for the prisoners Dr. Gronow was not present, being sadly occupied at Old Barn.

"Although there is no charge, and

no sign of any charge, your Worships, and therefore I have no *locus standi*,” Mr. Blickson had returned to his place, and adopted an airy and large-hearted style, “ I would crave the indulgence of the Bench for one or two quite informal remarks; my object being to remove every stigma from the characters of my respected clients. On the best authority I may state that their one desire and intention was to surrender like a pair of lambs [at this description a grin went round, and the learned magistrates countenanced it], if they could only realise the nature of the charge against them. But when they demanded, like Englishmen, to know why their liberty should be suddenly abridged, what happened? No one answered them! All those admirable men were doubtless eager to maintain the best traditions of the law, but the hurricane out-roared them. They laboured to convey their legal message; but where is education in a whirl like that? On the other hand, one of these law-abiding men had been engaged gloriously in maintaining the athletic honour of his county. This does not appear to have raised in him at all the pugnacity that might have been expected. He strolled into the market-place, partly to stretch his poor bruised legs, and partly perhaps to relieve his mind, which men of smaller nature would have done by tippling. Suddenly he is surrounded by a crowd of very strong men in the dark. The Fair has long been over; the lights are burning low; scarcely enough of fire in them to singe the neck of an enterprising member of our brave constabulary. In the thick darkness and hubbub of the storm, the hero who has redeemed the belt, and therewith the ancient fame of our county, supposes, naturally supposes, charitable as his large mind is, that he is beset for the sake of the money, which he has not yet received, but intends to distribute so freely when he gets it. The time of this honourable Bench is too valuable to the public to be wasted over any descriptions of a petty

skirmish, no two of which are at all alike. My large-bodied client, the mighty wrestler, might have been expected to put forth his strength. It is certain that he did not do so. The man who had smitten down the pride of Cornwall, would strike not a blow against his own county. He gave a playful push or two, a chuck under the chin, such as a pretty milkmaid gets when she declines a sweeter touch. I marvel at his wonderful self-control. His knuckles were shattered by a blow from a staff; like a roof in a hailstorm his great chest rang (for the men of Perliton can hit hard); yet is there anything to show that he even endeavoured to strike in return? And how did it end? In the very noblest way. The pastor of the village, a most saintly man but less than an infant in Harvey Tremlett's hands, appears at the gate, when there is no other let or hindrance to the freedom of a Briton. Is he thrust aside rudely? Is he kicked out of the way? Nay, he lays a hand upon the big man's breast, the hand of a Minister of the Cross. He explains that the law, by some misapprehension, is fain to apprehend this simple-minded hero. The nature of the sad mistake is explained; and to use a common metaphor, which excited some derision just now, but which I repeat, with facts to back me,—gentle as a lamb, yonder lion surrenders!”

“ The lamb is very fortunate in his shepherd,” said Dr. Morshead drily, as Blickson sat down under general applause. “ But there is nothing before the Bench, Mr. Blickson. What is the object of all this eloquence?”

“ The object of my very simple narrative, your Worships, is to discharge my plain duty to my clients. I would ask this Worshipful Bench not only to dismiss a very absurd application, but also to add their most weighty opinions, that Harvey Tremlett and James Fox,—no, I beg pardon, that was the first mistake of this ever erroneous blacksmith—James Kettle, I should say, have set a fine example of perfect submission to the law of the land.”

"Oh come, Mr. Blickson, that is out of the record. We pronounce no opinion upon that point. We simply adjudge that the case be now dismissed."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

AN INLAND RUN.

"WON'ERFUL well 'e doed it, sir. If ever I gets into Queer Street, you be the one to get me out." This well-merited compliment was addressed by Dick Herniman to Attorney Blickson, at a convivial gathering held that same afternoon to celebrate the above recorded triumph of Astræa. The festal party had been convoked at the Wheatsheaf Tavern in Perliton Square, and had taken the best room in the house, looking out of two windows upon that noble parallelogram, which Perliton never failed to bring with it orally when it condescended to visit Perlycross. The party had no idea of being too abstemious, the object of its existence being the promotion, as well as the assertion, of the liberty of the subject.

Six individuals were combining for this lofty purpose, to wit the two gentlemen so unjustly charged, and their stout ally of high artistic standing, that very able lawyer who had vindicated right; also Captain Timberlegs, and Horatio Peckover Esquire; and pleasant it is as well as strange to add, Master Joseph Crang of Susscot, blacksmith, farrier, and engineer. For now little differences of opinion, charges of perjury and body-snatching, assault and battery, and general malfeasance, were sunk in the large liberality of success, the plenitude of John Barleycorn, and the congeniality of cordials.

That a stripling like the Hopper should be present was a proof of some failure of discretion upon his part, for which he atoned by a tremendous imposition; while the prudent Pike and the modest Mopuss had refused with short gratitude this banquet and gone home. But the Hopper regarded himself as a witness (although he had not been called upon) in right of his re-

searches at Blackmarsh, and declared that officially he must hear the matter out, for an explanation had been promised. The greater marvel was perhaps that Joe Crang should be there, after all the lash of tongue inflicted on him. But when their Worships were out of sight, Blickson had taken him by the hand in a truly handsome manner, and assured him of the deep respect he felt, and ardent admiration, at his too transparent truthfulness. Joe Crang, whose heart was very sore, had shed a tear at this touching tribute, and was fain to admit, when the lawyer put it so, that he was compelled in his own art to strike the finest metal the hardest.

So now all six were in very sweet accord, having dined well, and now refining the firmer substances into the genial flow. Attorney Blickson was in the chair, for which nature had well qualified him; and perhaps in the present more ethereal age, he might have presided in a syndicate producing bubbles of gold and purple, subsiding into a bluer tone. For this was a man of quick natural parts, and gifted in many ways for his profession. Every one said that he should have been a barrister; for his character would not have mattered so much, when he went from one town to another, and above all to such a place as London, where they think but little of it. If he could only stay sober, and avoid promiscuous company, and make up his mind to keep his hand out of quiet people's pockets, and do a few other respectable things, there was no earthly reason that any one could see why he should not achieve fifty guineas a day, and even be a match for Mopuss, K.C., the father of Mr. Penniloe's fattest pupil.

"This honourable company has a duty now before it." Mr. Blickson drew attention by rapping on the table, and then leaning back in his chair, with a long pipe rested on a bowl of punch, or rather nothing but a punch-bowl now. On his right hand sat Herniman, the giver of the feast (or the lender at least, till prize-

money came to fist), and on the other side was Tremlett, held down by heavy nature from the higher flights of Bacchus, because no bowl was big enough to make him drunk. "Yes, a duty, gentlemen, which I, as the representative of Law, cannot see neglected. We have all enjoyed one another's good health, in the way in which it concerns us most; we have also promoted, by such prayers, the weal of the good Squire Mockham, and that of another gentleman, who presented himself as *amicus curiae* (gentlemen, excuse a sample of my native tongue), a little prematurely perhaps last night, and left us to sigh for him vainly to-day. I refer to the gentleman with whom another, happily now present and the soul of our party, and rejoicing equally in the Scriptural name of James, was identified in an early stage of this still mysterious history by one of the most conscientious, truthful and self-possessed of all witnesses I have ever had the honour yet of handling in the box. At least he was not in the box, because there was none; but he fully deserves to be kept in a box. I am sorry to see you smile; at my prolixity I fear, therefore I will relieve you of it. Action is always more urgent than words. Duty demands that we should have this bowl refilled. Pleasure, which is the fairer sex of duty, as every noble sailor knows too well, awaits us next in one of her most tempting forms, as an ancient poet has observed. If it is sweet to witness from the shore the travail of another, how much sweeter to have his trials brought before us over the flowing bowl, while we rejoice in his success and share it. Gentlemen, I call upon Captain Richard Herniman for his promised narrative of that great expedition, which by some confusion of the public mind has become connected with a darker enterprise. Captain Richard Herniman to the fore!"

"Bain't no Cappen, and bain't got no big words," said Timber-legged Dick, getting up with a rattle and

standing very staunchly; "but can't refuse this here gentleman under the circumstances. And every word as I says will be true."

After this left-handed compliment, received with a cheer in which the lawyer joined, the ancient salt premised that among good friends he relied on honour bright that there should be no dirty turn. To this all pledged themselves most freely; and he, trusting rather in his own reservations than their pledge that no harm should ever come of it, shortly told his story, which in substance was as follows. But some names which he omitted have been filled in, now that all fear of inquiry is over.

In the previous September, when the nights were growing long, a successful run across the Channel had been followed by a peaceful, and well-conducted, landing at a lonely spot on the Devonshire coast, where that pretty stream the Otter flows into the sea. That part of the shore was very slackly guarded then; and none of the authorities got scent, while scent was hot, of this cordial international transaction. Some of these genuine wares found a home promptly and pleasantly in the neighbourhood, among farmers, tradesmen, squires, and others, including even some loyal rectors, and zealous Justices of the Peace, or peradventure their wives and daughters capable of minding their own keys. Some, after dwelling in caves, or furze-ricks, barns, potato-burries, or hollow trees, went inland, or to Sidmouth, or Seaton, or anywhere else where a good tax-payer had plastered up his windows, or put "Dairy" on the top.

But the prime of the cargo, and the very choicest goods, such as fine Cognac, rich silk and rare lace, too good for pedlars and too dear for country churches, still remained stored away very snugly in some old dry cellars beneath the courtyard of a ruined house at Budleigh; where nobody cared to go poking about, because the old gentleman who lived there once had been murdered nearly

thirty years ago for informing against smugglers, and was believed to be in the habit of walking there now. These shrewd men perceived how just it was that he should stand guard in the spirit over that which in the flesh he had betrayed, especially as his treason had been caused by dissatisfaction with his share in a very fine contraband venture. Much was now committed to his posthumous sense of honour; for the free-traders vowed that they could make a thousand pounds of these choice wares in any wealthy town, like Bath, or Bristol, or even Weymouth, then more fashionable than it is now.

But suddenly their bright hopes were dashed. Instead of reflecting on the value of these goods, they were forced to take hasty measures for their safety. A very bustling man of a strange suspicious turn, as dry as a mull of snuff and as rough as a nutmeg-grater, in a word a Scotchman out of sympathy with the natives, was appointed to the station at Sidmouth, and before he unpacked his clothes began to rout about, like a dog who has been trained to hunt for morels. Very soon he came across some elegant French work in cottages, or fishers' huts, or on the necks of milkmaids; and nothing would content him until he had discovered, even by such deep intriguery as the distribution of lollipops, the history of the recent enterprise.

"Let bygones be bygones," would have been the Christian sentiment of any new-comer at all connected with the district; and Sandy MacSpudder must have known quite well that his curiosity was in the worst of taste, and the result too likely to cast discredit on his own predecessor, who was threatening to leave the world just then with a large family unprovided for. Yet such was this Scotchman's pertinacity and push, that even the little quiet village of Budleigh, which has nothing to do but to listen to its own brook Prattling to the gently smiling valley, even this rose-fringed couch of peace was ripped up

by the slashing of this rude lieutenant's cutlass. A spectre, even of the best Devonian antecedents, was of less account than a scarecrow to this matter-of-fact Lowlander. "A' can smell a rat in that ghostie," was his profane conclusion.

This put the spirited free-traders on their mettle. Fifty years ago that Scotch interloper would have learned the restful qualities of a greener sod than his. But it is of interest to observe how the English nature softened when the smiting times had lapsed. It scarcely occurred to this gentler generation that a bullet from behind a rock would send this spry inquirer to solve larger questions on his own account. Savage brutality had less example now.

The only thing therefore was to over-reach this man. He was watching all the roads along the coast to east and west; but to guard all the tangles of the inward roads and the blessed complexity of Devonshire lanes would have needed an army of pure natives. Whereas this busy foreigner placed no faith in any man born in that part of the world, such was his judgment, and had called for a draft of fellows having different vowels.

This being so, it served him right to be out-witted by the thick heads he despised. And he had made such a fuss about it at head-quarters, and promised such wonders if the case were left to him, that when he captured nothing but a string of worn-out kegs filled with diluted sheep-wash, he not only suffered for a week from gastric troubles through his noseless hurry to identify Cognac, but also received a stinging reprimand, and an order for removal to a very rugged coast, where he might be more at home with the language and the manners. And his predecessor's son obtained that sunny situation. Thus is zeal rewarded always, when it does not spell success.

None will be surprised to hear that the simple yet masterly stratagem, by means of which the fair western county vindicated its commercial rights

against northern arrogance and ignoble arts, was the invention of a British Tar, an old Agamemnon, a true heart of oak, re-membered also in the same fine material. The lessons of Nelson had not been thrown away; this humble follower of that great hero first misled the adversary, and then broke his line. Invested as he was by superior forces seeking access even to his arsenal, he despatched to the eastward a lumbering craft, better known to landsmen as a waggon, heavily laden with straw newly threshed, under which was stowed a tier of ancient kegs which had undergone too many sinkings in the sea (when a landing proved unsafe) to be trusted any more with fine contents. Therefore they now contained sheep-wash, diluted from the brook to the complexion of old brandy. In the loading of this waggon special mystery was observed, which did not escape the vigilance of the keen lieutenant's watchmen. With a pair of good farm-horses, and a farm-lad on the ridge of the load, and a heavy fellow whistling not too loudly on the lade-rail, this harmless car of fictitious Bacchus, crowned by effete Ceres, wended its rustic way towards the lowest bridge of the Otter, a classic and idyllic stream. These two men, of pastoral strain and richest breadth of language, received orders of a simplicity almost equal to their own.

No sooner was this waggon lost to sight and hearing in the thick October night, and the watchmen speeding by the short cuts to report it, than a long light cart, with a strong out-stepping horse, came down the wooded valley to the ghostly court. In half an hour it was packed and started inland, passing the birthplace of a very great man, straight away to Farringdon and Rockbear, with orders to put up at Clist Hidon before daylight, where lived a farmer who would harbour them securely. On the following night they were to make their way, after shunning Cullompton, to the shelter in Blackmarsh, where they would be safe from all intrusion and

might await fresh instructions, which would take them probably towards Bridgwater and Bristol. By friendly ministrations of the Whetstone men, who had some experience in trade of this description, all this was managed with the best success. Jem Kettle knew the country roads by dark as well as daylight, and Harvey Tremlett was not a man to be collared very easily. In fact, without that sad mishap to their very willing and active nag, they might have fared through Perlycross, as they had through other villages where people wooed the early pillow, without a trace or dream of any secret treasure passing.

Meanwhile that pure and earnest Scotchman was enjoying his own acuteness. He allowed that slowly rolling waggon of the Eleusine dame to proceed some miles upon its course before his men stood at the horses' heads. There was wisdom in this, as well as pleasure (the joy a cat prolongs with mouse), inasmuch as all these good things were approaching his own den of spoil. When the Scotchmen challenged the Devonshire swains, with flourish of iron and of language even harder, an interpreter was sorely needed. Not a word could the Northmen understand that came from the broad soft Southron tongues; while the Devonshire men feigning, as they were bidden, to take them for highwaymen, feigned also not to know a syllable of what they said.

This led, as it was meant to do, to very lavish waste of time and increment of trouble. The carters instead of lending hand for the unloading of their waggon, sadly delayed that operation, by shouting out "thaves!" at the top of their voice, tickling their horses into a wild start now and then, and rolling the Preventive men off at the tail. MacSpudder himself had a narrow escape; for just when he chanced to be between two wheels, both of them set off without a word of notice; and if he had possessed at all a western body, it would have been run over. Being made of corkscrew metal by hereditary right he wriggled

out as sound as ever ; and looked forward all the more to the solace underlying this reluctant pile, as dry as any of his own components.

Nothing but his own grunts can properly express the fattening of his self-esteem (the whole of which was home-fed) when his men, without a fork (for the Boreal mind had never thought of that) but with a great many chops of knuckles (for the skin of straw is tougher than a Scotchman's) found their way at midnight, like a puzzled troop of divers, into the reef at bottom of the sheafy billows. Their throats were in a husky state, from chaff too penetrative and barn-dust over volatile, and they risked their pulmonary weal by opening a too sanguine cheer.

"Duty compels us to test the staple," the officer in command decreed ; and many mouths gaped round the glow of his bullseye. "Don't 'ee titch none of that there wassh," the benevolent Devonians exclaimed in vain. Want of faith prevailed ; every man suspected the verdict of his predecessor, and even his own at first swallow. If Timber-legged Dick could have timed the issue, what a landing he might have made ! For the coast-guard tested staple so that twenty miles of coast were left free for fifty hours.

Having told these things in his gravest manner, Herniman, who so well combined the arts of peace and war, filled another pipe and was open to inquiry. Everybody accepted his narrative with pleasure, and heartily wished him another such a chance of directing fair merchandise along the lanes of luck. The blacksmith alone had some qualms of conscience for apparent backslidings from the true faith of free-trade. But they clapped him on the back, and he promised with a gulp that he never would peep into a Liberal van again.

"There is one thing not quite clear to me," said the Hopper, when the man of iron was settled below the table, whereas the youth had kept him-self in trim for steeplechasing.

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"What could our friend have seen in that vehicle of free-trade, to make him give that horrible account of its contents ? And again, why did Mr. Harvey Tremlett carry off that tool of his which I found in the water ?"

With a wave of his hand, for his tongue had now lost, by one of nature's finest arrangements, the copiousness of the morning, whereas a man of sober silence would now have bloomed into fluency, the chairman deputed to Herniman and Tremlett the honour of replying to the Hopper.

"You see, sir," said the former, "it was just like this. We was hurried so in stowing cargo, that some of the finest laces in the world, such as they calls *Valentines*, worth maybe fifty or a hundred pounds a yard, was shot into the hold anyhow among a lot of silks and so on. Harvey and Jemmy was on honour to deliver goods as they received them ; blacksmith seed some of this lace a'flappin' under black tarporly ; and he knewed as your poor Squire had been figged out for 's last voyage with same sort of stuff, only not so good. A clever old 'oman maketh some to Perlycross ; Honiton lace they calls it here. What could a' think but that Squire was there ? Reckon Master Crang would a' told 'e this, if so be a' hadn't had a little drap too much."

"Thou bee'st a liar ! Han't had half enough, I tell 'e," the blacksmith from under the table replied, and then rolled away into a bellowsful of snores.

"To be sure !" said Peckover. "I see now. Tamsin Tamlin's work it was. Sergeant Jakes told me all about it. With all the talk there had been of robbing graves, and two men keeping in the dark so, no wonder Crang thought what he did. Many people went to see that lace, I heard ; and they said it was too good to go underground ; though nothing could be too good for the Squire. Well now, about that other thing, why did Mr. Tremlett make off with *little Billy* ?"

"Can't tell 'e, sir, very much about 'un," the wrestler answered, with a laugh at the boy's examination. "Happen I tuk 'un up, a'veelin' of 'un to frighten blacksmith maybe; and then I vancied a' maight come ooseful if nag's foot went wrong again. Then when nag goed on all right, I just chucked 'un into a pool of watter, for to kape 'un out o' sight of twisty volk. Ort more to zatisfy this young gent!"

"Yes. I am a twisty folk, I suppose. Unless there is any objection, I should like very much to know why Dr. Fox was sent on that fool's errand to the pits."

"Oh, I can tell 'e that, sir," replied Jem Kettel, for the spirit of the lad, and his interest in their doings, had made him a favourite with the present company. "It were one of my mates as took too much trouble. He were appointed to meet us at the cornder of the four roads, an hour afore that or more; and he got in a bit of a skear, it seems, not knowing why we was so behindhand. But he knowed Dr. Vox, and thought 'un better out o' way, being such a sharp chap and likely to turn meddlesome. He didn't want 'un to hang about up street as a' maight with some sick 'ooman, and so he zent un' t'other road to tend a little haxident. Wouldn't do he no harm, a' thought, and might zave us some bother. But, Lord! if us could have only knowed the toorn your volk would putt on it, I reckon us should have roared and roared all droo the strates of Perlycross. Vainest joke as ever coom to my hearin', or ever wull, however long the Lord kapeth me a'livin'. And to think of Jem Kettel being sworn to for a learned doctor! Never had no teethache I han't, since

the day I heered on it." A hearty laugh was held to be a sovereign cure for toothache then, and perhaps would be so still if the patient could accomplish it.

"Well, so far as that goes, you have certainly got the laugh of us," Master Peckover admitted, not forgetting that he himself came in for as much as any one. "But come now, as you are so sharp, just give me your good opinion; and you being all along the roads that night, ought to have seen something. Who were the real people in that horrid business?"

"The Lord in heaven knoweth, sir," said Tremlett very solemnly. "Us passed in front of Perlycross church about dree o'clock of the morning. Nort were doing then, or us could scarcely have helped hearing of it. Even if 'em heered our wheels, and so got out of sight, I reckon us must a' seed the earth-heap, though moon were gone a good bit afore that. And zim' th there waz no harse there. A harse will sing out a'most always to another harse at night, when a' heareth of him coming and a' standeth lonely. Us met nawbody from Perlycross to Blackmarsh. As to us and Clam-pit volk, zoonder would us goo to gallows than have ort to say to grave-work. And gallows be too good for 'un, accardin' my opinion. But gen'lemen, afore us parts, I wants to drink the good health of the best man I've a knowed on airth. Bain't saying much perhaps, for my ways hath been crooked-like. But maketh any kearless chap belave in good above 'un, when a hap'th across a man as thinketh nort of his own zell but gi'eth his life to other volk. God bless Passon Penniloe!"

(To be continued.)

THE PARLIAMENTS AND MINISTRIES OF THE CENTURY.

THE British Constitution is the grandest example of the type which is not made but grows. It knows not the day of its nativity ; it came not forth into the world full-blown from some ingenious and constructive brain ; its natural elasticity has never been confined within the range of any document. It is an accretion of accumulated custom and tradition, " broadening down from precedent to precedent," and undergoing changes which are not the less sure because they make no stir. It is, in a word, what jurists have agreed to call a flexible and not a rigid constitution. It is then only natural to suppose that within the present century time's "thievish progress" has left its mark upon it. The great central institutions stand apparently unmoved, but the stream of time runs on, and slowly but surely tells upon the fabric. It looks outwardly the same, but the careful eye can detect the changes which do not lie upon the surface. The present Parliament is the twenty-fifth of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. We have therefore had an experience of nearly a century of such Parliaments, and it may be interesting to take a rapid glance backwards, and see what can be gleaned from such a survey of the now closing century of our parliamentary history.

Something in the first place must be said of the relative durations of Parliaments and Ministries. It will have been observed that the twenty-five Parliaments of the century have had an average life of about four years apiece. But their respective fates have been curiously divergent. A few have lived to a green old age, while of others the thin-spun thread has been early cut. Three only have lasted over six years, and only seven over five ; so

that the proportion of long-lived Parliaments is comparatively small. In three cases life has failed to reach a single year. Having regard to the average it may be said that the Septennial Act has proved of much less importance than might have been predicted. For many years, indeed, during the reign of George the Third it was a common thing for Parliaments to die a natural death, but things are now so altered, that the advocates of triennial Parliaments would gain little satisfaction by the change. Contemporaneously with these twenty-five Parliaments there have been up to the time of Mr. Gladstone's retirement a succession of twenty-nine Ministries ; but after making due allowance for reconstructions, and for the fact that prior to the Reform Act of 1867 a dissolution followed upon the demise of the Crown, it will be seen that the number of Ministries and Parliaments has been about the same, and it may be said generally that each Parliament has had its separate Ministry. The one great exception was that of the Earl of Liverpool who took the reins of government in 1812, and continued to hold them for a space of fourteen years, during which period no less than four Parliaments were elected. It was a singular exception which was due to the peculiar conditions of the time, and it is not likely to recur again. The relation of Ministries and Parliaments, and the intimate dependence of the former upon the latter could not be better illustrated than by a careful observation of their contemporaneous histories. An old Ministry will sometimes meet a new Parliament, and a new Parliament will sometimes grudgingly support an old Ministry, but as a general rule they may be said to rise and fall to-

gether. Each Parliament is too jealous to tolerate any creation but its own.

A brief and rapid sketch of the Parliaments and Ministries, sufficient to bring into relief their salient characteristics, will enable us to trace the changes which have crept into the spirit and the working of our parliamentary institutions.

The first Parliament of the United Kingdom, which was merely the continued existence of one elected in 1796, met in January 1801, and was dissolved in the autumn of the following year. Pitt was at this time the one indispensable man who alike possessed the King's confidence and the capacity to govern. Addington tried to do it for a while, but Pitt alone was equal to the times, and he was Premier when he sank beneath the cares of office in 1806. This was a year which was marked by events of great constitutional importance. It was then, for the first time since the rise of Pitt in 1783, and for the last time until 1830, that the Whigs held office. As Byron wittily put it,

Nought's permanent among the human race,
Except the Whigs not getting into place.

Those who are accustomed to the present uniform swing of the pendulum from one side to the other, may well reflect with amazement upon a time when one of the great parties in the State, with one brief exception, was excluded from office for nearly half a century. It is a fact which is eloquent with a meaning. This Whig Ministry, the "Ministry of all the Talents," with Lord Grenville as Premier and Fox as Foreign Secretary, had a very brief existence. They proposed a measure of Catholic Relief. The King not only forbade them to introduce the Bill, or even to offer him any advice upon the subject, but also endeavoured to extort from them a pledge that they would never presume to do so again. They refused, were dismissed, and a Tory Ministry with the Duke of Portland at its head was

appointed in their place. It was in this government, it may be noted, that Lord Palmerston, then a young man of twenty-three, held his first office as a Lord of the Admiralty. This Ministry immediately advised a dissolution, and taking advantage of the favouring breezes of the hour, they succeeded in obtaining a substantial majority. Then ensued in home politics a long period of monotonous routine. If the administration was safe, it certainly was dull. It was an age of respectable mediocrities. Burke's stately eloquence, Fox's generous ardour, and Pitt's administrative genius, were a memory to treasure, and that was all. When the mantles fell, there were none to take them up. The Duke of Portland died in 1809, and was succeeded by Spencer Perceval, a conscientious minister, whose useful services did not screen him from the gibes of the malicious and the witty. It was recorded to his credit that he was "faithful to Mrs. Perceval and kind to the Master Percevals"; but it was somewhat cruelly added that "if public and private virtues must always be incompatible," it were better that "he destroyed the domestic happiness of Wood or Cockell, owed for the veal of the preceding year, whipped his boys, and saved his country." Perceval was assassinated in the lobby of the House in 1812, and for nearly fifteen years the country submitted to the soporific rule of the "arch-mediocrity," the industrious Earl of Liverpool. He retired from ill health in 1827, and was succeeded by the brilliant and meteoric Canning, who at least for his contributions to *The Anti-Jacobin* will always find a grateful posterity. A few months of office killed him, and Lord Goderich, whom Disraeli dubbed the "transient and embarrassed phantom," took for a time the vacant place. He made way for the Duke of Wellington in 1828, and for the first and last time a great soldier became Prime Minister of England. For nearly three years he saw to it that the King's govern-

ment should be carried on, and his administration was marked by an event of great constitutional importance, the passing of the Act for Catholic Emancipation. It was an event of great moment in itself, for it closed a conflict which had lasted for nearly a generation. But the overwhelming interest excited by the passing of the Act has thrown into the shade an aspect of the case which is equally important. George the Fourth yielded where George the Third had stood firm, and in surrendering the position, he marked, as will be seen, the final consummation of a change in our constitutional practice which had long been impending.

The long period of repression and reaction which had followed the excesses of the French Revolution, and which had thrown Liberalism backwards for nearly half a century, was now drawing to a close. The spirit of innovation was everywhere abroad, and the Don Quixotes of Conservatism began to labour heavily beneath the cumbrous armour of a bygone age. The new Parliament of 1830 contained a majority favourable to reform. The Duke of Wellington resigned, and Earl Grey formed a Whig administration. The events which followed are too well known to need to be repeated here. For our present purpose it is enough to note that Earl Grey successfully appealed to the country in 1831, and after a great historic conflict with the Lords passed the first Reform Bill into law. Earl Grey retired in 1834, and Lord Melbourne took his place. This amiable and easy peer, the "indolent Epicurean," who was content "to saunter over the destinies of a nation and lounge away the glory of an empire," had not held office many months when William the Fourth used his prerogative in a way of which something will presently be said. He believed, or affected to believe, that the Commons did not truly represent the opinion of the country. He dismissed the Whig Ministry and sent for Sir Robert Peel, who advised a

dissolution. But the King was wrong, and Peel, rather than meet a hostile majority in the House of Commons, resigned. Lord Melbourne returned to power and formed one of the longest administrations of the century. His authority in 1839 began to ooze away, and his Government suffered a virtual defeat on a measure which involved the suspension of the constitution of Jamaica. He resigned; Sir Robert Peel was sent for, and his attempt to form a government gave rise to one of those events which, though trivial in themselves, produce more important consequences. On this occasion it was a question of the removal of the Ladies of the Bedchamber, which, though a purely personal question, constrained Sir Robert to give up his undertaking, and prolonged the Whig Ministry until 1841. In that year occurred an incident which has since been turned into a very formidable precedent. A motion of want of confidence was the first time in the history of the House of Commons successfully carried against the Ministry of the day by a majority of one. This historic resolution, which was moved by Peel himself, deserves particular record. It ran as follows: "That Her Majesty's Government do not sufficiently possess the confidence of the House of Commons to enable them to carry through the House measures which they deem essential to the public welfare, and that their continuance in office under such circumstances is at variance with the spirit of the Constitution." It was a strongly worded claim by the Commons for a paramount position which is now without question accorded to them. The Melbourne Ministry met the new Parliament in 1841, and, being defeated on an amendment to the Address, immediately resigned. Sir Robert Peel succeeded in forming a durable administration which lasted to the summer of 1846, when a parallel event to that which happened in 1836 occurred. Just as Mr. Gladstone split

up the Liberal party on the question of Home Rule, so did Sir Robert Peel split up the Conservatives on the repeal of the Corn Laws. The Irish Famine gave his mind the final bias in the direction to which it had previously been tending ; as the Duke of Wellington remarked with characteristic frankness, "Rotten potatoes have done it all ; they put him in his d——d fright." It is not surprising that Peel's discontented followers looked out for an occasion of revenge, and they found it in a Coercion Bill for Ireland. The Peel Ministry were defeated by a majority of seventy-three votes. It was a rancorous outburst of party spirit which set an evil precedent for the future conduct of parliamentary government.

Lord John Russell now succeeded to the place to which his eminent merits had entitled him. His diminutive stature caused people to wonder how one so great could yet be so little, while his self-confidence was such that men jestingly declared that he was ready to do anything at a moment's notice, from performing an operation to taking command of the Channel Fleet. His administration lasted until 1852, and was marked by an incident unique in the parliamentary history of the century ; the dismissal of Lord Palmerston from the Foreign Office for his persistent refusal to submit his despatches to his colleagues and the Crown. It was an event which emphasised the right of the Premier and the Crown to be consulted by Ministers on all important matters which come within the sphere of their official duties, and established once for all the practice to be followed in the future. However in 1852 Lord Palmerston had, as he said, his "tit-for-tat" with Lord John Russell. Upon the *coup d'état* in France a Militia Bill was introduced, and the Government was defeated on an amendment proposed by Lord Palmerston himself. They immediately resigned. The Earl of Derby, whose dashing oratory has earned for him

the title of the "Rupert of debate," formed a government of mostly untried men, which was styled by the facetious the "Who, Who, Government." To its inglorious existence Disraeli's first adventures in the region of finance speedily proved fatal. As Lord Derby wittily said, Benjamin's mess was greater than all the rest. The general election which followed gave the Ministry so small a majority that they resigned. Parties were now in a state of unequal equilibrium, and neither Conservatives nor Whigs could form a strong administration. Then ensued the uncommon spectacle of a Coalition Ministry. The Peelites under the leadership of the Earl of Aberdeen formed a government by calling in the assistance of the Whigs. Disraeli declared that the English people detested coalitions. They had an evil reputation from the fact that George the Third loved to make use of them in order to set one party against the other. And to this one in particular the country had no reason to be grateful, for it proved responsible for the war in the Crimea. In 1855 the Coalition Ministry fell discredited, on Mr. Roebuck's motion for a committee of inquiry into the conduct of the war, by an adverse majority of one hundred and fifty-seven votes. Consisting as it did of a group of men who were rivals in ability but who disagreed in principle, it contained in itself the seeds of discord, and permitted things to drift. Lord Palmerston succeeded, and held office until 1857, when he was defeated on Mr. Cobden's motion condemning his policy in China. But Lord Palmerston was a man of daring and resource ; he knew his countrymen, and to their judgment he appealed. To the amazement of the world he succeeded in reversing the verdict of the Commons, and was rewarded by obtaining a substantial majority. The Manchester School of politicians, who were the proximate cause of the election, were smitten hip and thigh, and Bright and Cobden with the rest were

ejected from their seats. It was an almost unexampled triumph for a Minister; but it was short-lived. Once again, in 1858 as in 1852, Louis Napoleon proved fatal to an English administration. The Orsini bombs had an explosive force in more senses than one, and reverberated far beyond the narrow circle of the Tuilleries. They were the immediate cause of the introduction of Lord Palmerston's Conspiracy Bill, and in the course of the debate an amendment was moved by Mr. Milner Gibson, involving a censure on the Government for its failure to reply to a French despatch which had been laid before Parliament. The amendment was carried by nineteen votes and Lord Palmerston resigned. The significance of the affair lies in the fact that it was an interference by the Commons in an act which belonged purely to the executive, and it is not without its meaning. The Earl of Derby once more formed a brief administration, with Disraeli as Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House. On an attempted measure of reform he was defeated on Lord John Russell's resolution by thirty-nine votes. An unsuccessful appeal to the country followed, and when Lord Hartington's amendment to the Address was carried by thirteen, the Derby Ministry resigned. Lord Palmerston again formed a strong administration which, by a curious sport of fortune, exactly coincided in duration with Lord Melbourne's second government, namely, six years and one hundred and forty-one days. Shortly after the dissolution Lord Palmerston died in 1865, and Lord John Russell, who was raised to the peerage as Earl Russell, assumed the reins of power. His former resistance to any extension of the Reform Act of 1832 had earned for him the nickname of "Finality Jack," but this did not prevent him from taking up the subject once again. Reform, however, was a thing which apparently neither side could handle with success. It proved fatal to Lord Russell

as it had done to his predecessor, and brought his government to an end within a year. It was a session rendered memorable by the formation of the party of the Cave of Adullam, and by the brilliant rhetoric of Robert Lowe, who electrified the House, and was wittily nicknamed by Disraeli the "Whitehead torpedo." The Earl of Derby now formed his third administration, and boldly grappling with reform, he took, to use a now celebrated phrase, his "leap in the dark." In 1868 his health compelled him to retire, and the opportunity came to Benjamin Disraeli. The "superlative Hebrew conjuror" of Carlyle became Prime Minister of England; and he who was at first laughed down with derision, commanded the respect and obedience of the House. To use his own expression, which is more forcible than elegant, he had climbed to the top of the greasy pole. It proved more slippery than probably even he imagined, and in a very few months he came down with a run, when Mr. Gladstone's resolution on the Irish Church placed him in a minority. Disraeli advised a dissolution, but he declined to meet a new House containing a majority against him. Mr. Gladstone thereupon formed his first administration, which endured for rather over five years and was marked by much legislative spirit. But in 1873 he was placed in a minority on an Irish University Bill. Disraeli was sent for by the Queen, but he prudently declined to form a new administration without a new Parliament. The end was not long delayed, for in February, 1874, Mr. Gladstone gave himself the *coup de grâce* by suddenly determining to advise a dissolution. The result showed a great Conservative reaction which once more brought Disraeli to the front. The events which followed will be within common memory. It must be enough to note the fact that the period which has elapsed since then has been marked by three long administrations, namely

those of Lord Beaconsfield, Mr. Gladstone, and the Marquis of Salisbury ; and that the year 1885 was marked by a Reform Act which gave rise to a sharp and short conflict with the Lords. But until the date of the introduction of the Home Rule Bill, no other matter of constitutional importance arose.

Such in the broadest possible outline is the history of the Ministries and Parliaments of the century ; a map, so to speak, disclosing the main features but ignoring the details of the region which we have rapidly traversed. What then are the most striking characteristics of the scene ? One of its most impressive features certainly is the change which has occurred in the position occupied by the House of Commons in relation to Ministers and the Crown. It stands out predominantly like some mountain range which towers above the plain. Here, as almost everywhere throughout the Western world, the people's House has arrogated to itself the first place in the State ; a fact which marks a step in the forward march of democracy, and is an unmistakable sign of what, in the absence of a better term, can only be called the spirit of the age. Popular Chambers have everywhere encroached upon rights and privileges which did not formerly belong to them. Sometimes victory has only been wrested with a struggle, but sometimes all has gradually and quietly been conceded. In England the process has a history of its own, and the history of the various ways in which it has manifested itself is the matter which now immediately concerns us.

And first as to the relation of the Commons to the Ministers and the Crown. The House had formerly no practical influence over either of the latter, or at least none legally recognised by the customs and the conventions of the Constitution. The Crown summoned and dissolved the House as it pleased, and Ministers had not much regard for its judgment or its votes.

If the Commons wished to have their way, their only resource was to present addresses to the Crown or to cut off the supplies. They might worry the Ministers or the Crown into concessions. But that state of things has long passed away, and from being a mere auxiliary organ of government the Lower House has won its way into an absolute pre-eminence. It has become, to make another use of Lord Rosebery's expression, the "predominant partner" in Parliament. It is upon the House of Commons that every eye is turned; it is there that the centre of political gravity has shifted. There have been no revolutions, no bombastic declamations or watering trees of liberty with blood ; but it is an accomplished fact notwithstanding. It now remains to be seen how this has come about, and to note the several steps in the transformation as they have occurred within the present century.

At the outset a distinction must be drawn between an Administration or a Government in general and those leading members of it who are said to form the Cabinet for it is the relations of the Crown, the Cabinet, and the Commons which will now have to be considered. It is in accordance with the illogical character of British institutions that the Cabinet is utterly unknown to the law. Both Pepys and Clarendon use the word, and according to the latter it was first applied, as a term of reproach among the courtiers, to the King's Committee of State in 1640. In like manner too the terms Prime Minister and Premier are not recognised by law. Swift speaks somewhere of the "premier ministers of State," as though in his day the office was beginning to be evolved. The Crown itself first presided in the councils of the Cabinet, and no Minister presumed to occupy the place. Walpole indeed was gravely accused of making for himself the place of a first Minister, a charge against which he indignantly protested.

But he was Premier in fact, if he was not so in name, as no one knew better than himself. As he said, when Townshend was admitted to the Cabinet, "the firm must be Walpole and Townshend, not Townshend and Walpole." During the reigns of the first two Georges, who knew little English and lived mostly at the Hanoverian Court, a free hand was tacitly accorded to English Cabinets in the administration of affairs. But with the accession of George the Third came a very different state of things. That his Ministers were his servants who might be appointed and dismissed solely at his own good will and pleasure, was not merely the preconceived opinion of the new King, but was apparently the generally received doctrine of the day, in which some statesmen themselves were willing to acquiesce. Lord Shelburne, for instance, indignantly declared that "he would never consent that the King of England should be a king of the Mahrattas," who was, he declared, "in fact nothing more than a royal pageant." The Commons sometimes turned restive, as when in 1780 they affirmed Mr. Dunning's resolution "that the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished." But feeble protests were of little avail, and when the first Parliament of the United Kingdom met in 1801, the old doctrine of kingship and prerogative was held in all its fulness. The magnitude of the change which has since occurred in our constitutional practice may best be realised by saying that as regards the relation of the Crown to the Cabinet and Commons, that practice has been totally inverted; and the process was accomplished within the first half of the century. At its beginning the Crown appointed and dismissed its Ministers without even deigning to consult the wishes of the Commons; that was a privilege of the monarch with which they were deemed to have no right of interference. Now, though the Crown selects its own Prime

Minister, he is to all intents and purposes appointed by the Commons. The party which possesses a majority in the House, in reality indicates the man who must be chosen. On the other hand the Crown would not now dismiss a Cabinet which possessed the confidence of the Commons, but would wait until that confidence was unmistakably withdrawn before venturing on such a use of the prerogative. There is here one of those constitutional conventions which, as Professor Dicey says, are "precepts for determining the mode and spirit in which the prerogative is to be exercised;" while the prerogative is "nothing else than the residue of discretionary or arbitrary authority which at any given time is legally left in the hands of the Crown." Perhaps the most important function of the Cabinet is to form, as it were, a connecting link between the Crown and Parliament. Mr. Gladstone has happily described it as "a clearing-house of political forces," where everything is balanced and adjusted, and the nett result obtained. But of those forces that exercised by the Commons is unquestionably the strongest, and inevitably has a preponderating share in directing the general movement of affairs.

On five occasions within the present century,—in 1806, 1818, 1829, 1834, and 1839—a crisis has occurred in the use of the prerogative, and they are excellent illustrations of the remarkable changes which have gradually transformed our constitutional conventions. In 1806 the Grenville Ministry proposed to introduce a Bill for Catholic Emancipation, an act of policy which drew from Sheridan the remark that he had often heard of people running their heads against a wall, but had never heard before of them building a wall to knock their heads against. What followed has already been narrated, and forms a striking illustration of the way in which the personal dislikes of the Crown to a particular form of policy were allowed to defeat the other forces

in the State. A Ministry was dismissed and another was appointed with as little regard to the opinions of the Commons as though they existed in another planet. The King's word was enough, and there was no more to be said ; and that was passed without protest which in these days would raise a storm of indignation. Again, in 1818 the Prince Regent performed an act of a very arbitrary kind. The demise of the King was hourly expected, and in order to avoid meeting the existing House, which he would have to summon upon his father's death, and to which it would seem that he had taken a dislike, he went down to Westminster and dissolved Parliament without the slightest notice. Events move on and the scene changes. George the Fourth is King ; and in 1829 the Government of the Duke of Wellington is forced to the conclusion that they can no longer avert the necessity for some measure of Catholic Relief. The King refuses to assent to the Bill and the Ministry resigns ; he withdraws his refusal and the Bill becomes law. It is perhaps not too much to say that, next to the Reform Act of 1832, this act of the King is the most important political event in the English history of this century. It was a surrender of the citadel ; it denoted, as Mr. Gladstone has said, "the death of British kingship in its older sense." Like Cleisthenes at Athens, George the Fourth admitted the people into partnership. From that day to this the Crown has not ventured to veto legislation on the ground merely of personal dislike. Its moral influence over Ministers may be great, but that is almost the limit of its powers. The scene shifts again, and William the Fourth is on the throne. He was a conscientious monarch who probably desired to use his prerogative in strict accordance with the constitutional conventions of the day. But the old kingly spirit still lingered in his mind, and his dislike of the Whigs betrayed him into a serious misuse of his pre-

rogative. The dislike of his father and his brother for the Whigs was unabashed and open, and they almost continuously shut them out of office in a way which is but another illustration of the old absolutist theory. The Whigs were too exclusive to be popular ; they were a sort of coterie with its seat at Holland House, not admitting even Burke to their councils in the degree to which he was entitled. But they nobly sacrificed their interests to their principles, and ran counter to the wishes of the Crown. William the Fourth shared the prejudice against them, and in 1834 he found a pretext to dismiss the Melbourne Ministry. Lord Althorp had succeeded his father as Earl Spencer, and the King, declaring his conviction that without him in the Commons the government could not be carried on, suddenly dismissed his Ministers. It was a perfectly legitimate use of the prerogative, but it was nevertheless a serious mistake. The House of Commons had its revenge. Upon the dissolution the Melbourne Ministry had to be recalled to power, and from that time down to the Conservative Reform Act of 1867 the Whigs enjoyed the largest share of office. For the last time in 1839 Ministers were kept out of office on the ground of personal disagreement with the Crown. At that time Sir Robert Peel, who had been asked to form a Cabinet, demanded that the Ladies of the Bedchamber should be changed with the old administration. Her Majesty refused, and the Melbourne Ministry dragged on a discredited existence until 1841. It was the last episode in a contest which is now probably for ever closed.

As the Crown has lost authority, so in proportion has the House of Commons gained it, and this in other ways than those already named. There is, for instance, nothing but the imperative demands of constitutional custom which compels a member of the Cabinet to sit in either House of Parliament ; but that custom has almost the force

of law; so that, in the case of a Minister who is not a Peer, he is practically bound to find a seat in the House of Commons. Mr. Gladstone held office from December 1845 to July 1846 without a seat in the House of Commons, and that is the most notable exception to the rule within the present century, and was the fruit of very special circumstances. So, too, a member of the Cabinet must always hold some office, and when Lord John Russell for a brief period once led the House of Commons without holding office, such an irregular arrangement was violently condemned. For it is by such constitutional practices as these that the House of Commons is able to retain its control over the Government. And so too with that paradox of the British Constitution by which the Cabinet, or the central executive body, has become almost the sole source of legislation. It is but a mark of the intimate connection which binds together Parliaments and Ministries. As in nature animals take colour from the objects which surround them, so have Ministries taken colour, so to speak, from Parliament and assumed the livery of a legislative body. Nor is this all, for the House of Commons has invaded the sphere of the executive, as it did when in 1857 and 1859 on the respective motions of Mr. Cobden and Mr. Milner Gibson it upset Ministries on purely administrative measures.

Of the relation of the House of Commons to the Lords it can only be said that there has been very little change. From the way in which the House of Lords is now occasionally spoken of, it might be inferred that that House had been in constant

conflict with the Commons. Yet in fact nothing can be further from the truth, for probably a less obstructive second Chamber the world has never seen. It has been infinitely less so than the American Senate or some of our Colonial Legislative Councils. Once only, over the great Reform Act, has there been anything like a serious conflict. The Lords have helped to pass into law all those great legislative measures which, as making for liberty and the emancipation of mankind, will always be regarded as the glory of the age. It is significant that of the Premiers of the century all but eight (and one of these was an Irish peer) have been members of the House of Lords, and, if we may judge from recent circumstances, the fashion does not seem likely to change.

It is then in the relations of the House of Commons to the Cabinet and the Crown that the spirit of the Constitution has within the present century undergone the greatest changes. In the supremacy of the People's House British democracy has, for good or ill, found its triumphant expression. That House is largely influenced by opinion from without, and is sensitive to every breath of popular applause or censure. Less than forty years ago a Ministry, which had been defeated in the Commons, successfully appealed to the country. Lord Palmerston's triumph in 1857 appears to have been the last occasion when the electors clearly demonstrated by their votes that they were not in agreement with the majority of their representatives. Such an event seems unlikely to occur again.

C. B. ROYLANC-KENT.

A DISCOURSE ON SEQUELS.

"It is the fate of sequels to disappoint the expectations of those that have waited for them." So writes Mr. Louis Stevenson in his dedication of *Catrina*, which was his own sequel to his earlier tale of *Kidnapped*. That authors should go on producing sequels is a matter that need surprise no one. When the world makes friends with a character in fiction, it is only natural that it should desire to hear more of him, and equally natural that the author should be glad to gratify the world's desire. It is hard to say good-bye for ever to a pleasant acquaintance even among mere mortals.

I suppose nobody ever read Shakespeare's *Henry the Fourth* without a lively desire to meet Falstaff again. That is just what Queen Elizabeth felt when she saw the play. Being a queen and a Tudor, she incontinently gave command for a sequel; at least tradition says that it is to Elizabeth's command we owe *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. The tradition, it is true, dates from considerably later than Shakespeare's time. The earliest written authority for it, I believe, is John Dennis's dedication (dated 1702) to *The Comical Gallant*, a new version he made of Shakespeare's play; and it depended for its preservation upon the oral testimony of Nicholas Rowe, who was not born until some fifty years after Shakespeare died. From that day to this, however, the story has been generally accepted. Queen Elizabeth, said Rowe, was so well pleased with the character of Falstaff that she commanded Shakespeare to continue it for one play more and to show him in love. If Rowe was right, and the Queen's desire was to see the fat knight in love, the wish was something less wise and more womanlike than was usual with her. Falstaff in love

would be a contradiction in terms, and Shakespeare could not so falsify his conception. This is how Falstaff himself in the play opens his design to Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol at the Garter Inn at Windsor. "My honest lads," says he, "I will tell you what I am about." "Two yards or more," interposes Pistol. "No quips now, Pistol," replies Sir John. "Indeed I am in the waist two yards about; but I am now about no waste; I am about thrift. Briefly, I do mean to make love to Ford's wife; I spy entertainment in her; she discourses, she carves, she gives the leer of invitation." "The report goes," he adds, "she has all the rule of her husband's purse."

That was as near as Shakespeare could bring himself to the ordained task, and if Elizabeth was satisfied, she was less exacting than she sometimes showed herself. Some lingering after lust there is in the would-be seducer of Mistress Ford and Mistress Page, and an unabated craving after lucre; but love!—not for the Queen's command the bare suspicion of it in the two yards' girth of him.

Whether it was the fate of this sequel to disappoint the royal expectation tradition does not say. It may be that the taste that desired to see Falstaff in love was satisfied with the horse-play of these merry wives. At any rate the play was a favourite with Restoration audiences; also with the late master of Balliol. We shall all, I suppose, with Hazlitt admit that it is an amusing play, with a great deal of humour, character, and nature in it. Yet will every right Falstaffian add with Hazlitt that he would have liked it much better if any one else had been the "hero" of it instead of Falstaff. The indignities suffered by Falstaff reminded Hazlitt of the suf-

ferings of Don Quixote. There Hazlitt let his natural zeal outrun his critical discretion. Falstaff is the very last man in the world to be called Quixotic; but in the main Hazlitt is right. Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is not the man he was in *Henry the Fourth*. His degradations are too dishonouring, and how much his wit has degenerated a simple test will prove. Falstaff's sallies of wit are among the most current of the world's quotations. Not one quotation, I think I am right in saying, comes from the Falstaff of the later play. Falstaff's admirers would willingly believe that as the Mistress Quickly that was servant to Dr. Caius was a different person from that other Mistress Quickly, the poor lone woman who kept the Boar's Head in Eastcheap, so it was not Hal's Mentor, but "another fellow of the same name" that was crammed into the buckbasket with the foul smocks; and for all his protestation, that, if he were served such another trick, he'd have his brains taken out and buttered and give them to a dog for a New Year's gift, nevertheless endured the disguise of the fat woman of Brentford and the horns of Herne the Hunter. The most ingenious German commentator has not yet however ventured on so desirable an hypothesis; and indeed the presence of Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol is damning.

If Shakespeare himself did not write a satisfactory Falstaffian sequel, it was, we must suppose, that his heart was not in the job. The tradition, according to Gildon, was that he took only a fortnight about it. Yet let not the profit column of the account be ignored. If Falstaff loses, Slender and Shallow gain. And there is the dear Welshman with his skimble-skamble and pibble-prabbles. So much there is to set to the credit side of sequels.

Cervantes also, another of the immortals, wrote a sequel, as one is reminded by Hazlitt's mention of Don Quixote. That sequels were generally

unsuccessful was the opinion even in Cervantes's day. "People say," says the bachelor Sampson Carrasco at the beginning of the second part, "that second parts are never good for anything." But the whole of Spain was clamouring for more about Don Quixote and Sancho. "Give us more Quixotades," people were saying. "Let Quixote encounter and Sancho talk, and be the rest what it will, we shall be contented." So in the fulness of time Cervantes gave them more Quixotades, and the world on the whole has therewith been well contented. To think of Barataria is to class the second part of *Don Quixote* among successful sequels.

True there is a hostile opinion to take account of, an opinion never lightly to be regarded in literary matters, the opinion of Charles Lamb. Lamb could not forgive the practical joking at the Duke's castle, could not bear to see his high-souled Quixote made the butt of duennas and serving-men. He thought Cervantes had been misled by his popular success to sacrifice a great idea to the taste of his contemporaries, to play to the gallery in fact. The whole passage in Lamb is delightful reading. *Incessu patet deus Carolus noster*, open the book of Elia where you will. But besides the impeccable literary critic, there is another Lamb of tender paradox and whimsical tirade, the discoverer of fairyland in Restoration comedy, the ultra-loyal lover of her Grace the Duchess of Newcastle. And one is inclined to say that this is the Lamb who declaims so against the second part of *Don Quixote*, when one finds him talking of the "unhallowed accompaniment of a Sancho" and of the "debasement fellowship of the clown," wishing almost the squire altogether away even in the first part. For the very essence of Cervantes's conception is the balance and contrast between Sancho and his Dapple and Quixote and his Rosinante. And Lamb might have remembered from Sampson Carrasco's discourse that in

Cervantes's own day the knight had his special partisans no less than the squire, and that some there were who would gladly have been spared the full tale of Quixote's drubbings. Lamb, it must be remembered, was not indulging in a set criticism of *Don Quixote*. He was arguing how apt pictorial illustrators were to materialise and vulgarise literary subjects, an interesting contention, well worth consideration. In the pictures, he said, Othello was always a blackamoor, Falstaff always plump Jack. So in *Don Quixote* they emphasised the buffooneries, and showed the rabblement always at the heels of Rosinante.

Therefore I think that we may discount Lamb's displeasure; and when he inveighs against the duchess and that "most unworthy nobleman" her lord, we shall remember that they bestowed upon Sancho Panza the governorship of Barataria, and that but for their bounty we should not have listened to the wisdom of Sancho, which is second only to the wisdom of Solomon. And when Lamb is vexed because Sancho's eyes were opened to know his master's infirmity, it may occur to the reader that this was but the logic of events; that so shrewd a clown as Sancho, in continuing to accompany Quixote upon his sallies, must needs have had his eyes opened pretty wide. And when Lamb complains that people read the book by halves, mistaking the author's purport, which was tears, we shall be inclined to reply that it is no less possible to read the book by halves another way, mistaking the author's purport, which was laughter at least as much as tears. Indeed, who should read *Don Quixote* by halves, hearing only the tears in it, who should wince from watching duennas and serving-men practising on the infirmity of the "Errant Star of Knighthood made more tender by eclipse," if not Charles Lamb, that had himself dwelt within the penumbra of eclipse and devoted a life to tending the

sister whose first aberration had been so tragic?

A strange thing happened to Cervantes. Before his sequel appeared it had been forestalled by a sequel from another hand. Cervantes thus had a better excuse for publishing a sequel than the popular wish or a queen's command. He had to oust a bastard claimant. The history is curious. Cervantes's first part was published in 1606, his second part not until 1616; and in 1614 there had appeared a "Second Part of the Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote," purporting to be by "the Licentiate Alonzo de Fernandez de Avellaneda." There was no such man as Avellaneda, and who the ingenious gentleman really was, who devised this very unquixotic sally, has in spite of numerous conjectures remained a secret to the present moment. That a book of this kind should have been published pseudonymously under the highest ecclesiastical sanction in the Spain of that day, seems to Mr. H. E. Watts (a famous student of the Don) proof enough, not only that it was a plot to injure Cervantes, but also that the author was some considerable person; Mr. Watts suggests the great Lope di Vega himself, Cervantes's life-long rival. It is a matter about which the doctors disagree, and disagree fiercely; the Cervantists have indeed been described as a body rent with the fiercest blood-feuds known among mortals. As to Avellaneda's literary merits, it is to be said that the spurious sequel had the esteem of the author of *Gil Blas*, and that it has been printed among the Spanish classics in the national Library of Spanish Authors. As to his motives and moral merits on the other hand, there is clear evidence of malice. The pseudonymous supplanter made personal attacks on the man whose work he professed to be continuing; he cast in Cervantes's teeth his age, his maimed hand and his ignorance, and boasted that he should deprive him of

the profits of his work. No wonder Cervantes was hurt. The public was impatient for the preface of Cervantes's new book, expecting resentments, railings, and invectives; but it was destined to be disappointed. Cervantes replied only to the taunts on his age and his wound, reminding his adversary that his hand had suffered fighting for his country in the victory of Lepanto. The provocation considered, the fun Cervantes makes of his rival in the later chapters of his second part is certainly good-humoured.

Apart from the personal motive, it would not be historically just to judge Avellaneda's action precisely as it would be judged to-day. We are far more punctilious and pugnacious nowadays than were our forefathers about proprietary rights in literary conceptions. It has been lately contended, for instance, that nobody but Mr. Thomas Hardy has any business to write about Wessex. Seeing that Wessex was before Mr. Hardy, this is putting the proprietary claim perhaps as high as it will go. When Mr. Walter Besant the other day wrote, greatly daring, a sequel to *The Doll's House*, it was only Mr. Besant's genial controversial method, or fifty thousand Ibsen-men had known the reason why. Throughout the height of Dickens's great popularity his books were accompanied by a crop of imitations, but these were flat piracy. Seriously it is hardly possible to imagine any one but Mr. Kipling venturing to write about Mulvaney, or another than Mr. Bret Harte telling fresh tales of Jack Hamlin or Yuba Bill; nor would anybody but M. Daudet have dared to send Tartarin upon his fool's errand to Port Tarascon. Things were different in the old days of epic and romantic cycles. Then every minstrel was at liberty to try his hand on a new lay of Achilles or Helen, a new romance of Roland or Lancelot, or another geste of Robin Hood. When a hero

or heroine caught the world's fancy, the world could not have enough tales about them. There is the secret of the interminable fertility of cyclic poets and romancers. It is not possible to reconcile all the versions of Helen's or Tristram's or Sigurd's stories. Many of the greatest legends and romances grew up by accretions contributed by successive hands. And this sense of common property in the literary stock survived later. The free use made by Shakespeare, who was contemporary with Cervantes, of literary material that he found to his hand and to his purpose, has been the subject of common remark. His contemporary Lodge seems not to have grudged him his own Rosalind. It was Molière, I think, who boasted (and certainly no one could make the statement with stricter truth) that he took possession of his property wheresoever he found it. Indeed, the very same thing that happened to Cervantes happened also in the case of the other Spanish classic *Guzman de Alfarache*, where also the genuine conclusion was forestalled by a sequel from another hand.

The fun Cervantes makes of his rival in his sequel is, as I have said, good-humoured, but elsewhere he spoke of the "disgust and nausea" which the sham Quixote had caused him, and it was unquestionably to prevent further personations that he consented to his own Quixote's death. For despite his defeat by the false Knight of the Moon, there was no real call for Quixote to die. He was just about to turn with hardly diminished zest from the knight-errantry of the romances to the idyllic life of the pastorals; and Sancho, for all the unsealing of his eyes, was steadfast not to leave him, as eager for the curds and cream as the knight was about the shepherdess queens. But now there had risen before Cervantes's eyes the fear of more spurious sequels. So he buried Quixote with sanctions and solemnities, bidding presumptuous

and wicked historians and plagiaries beware of profaning his subject and attempting a burden too weighty for their shoulders, expressly warning "Avellaneda" to suffer the wearied bones to rest in the grave. It may have been something of the same feeling that led Shakespeare to give us his true Falstaffian sequel, the inimitable scene in *Henry the Fifth*. There was an end worthy of the beginning, in Mistress Quickly-Pistol's unforgettable description of Falstaff a-dying, and Bardolph's supreme epitaph, "Would I were with him, wheresome'er he is, in heaven or hell." It was the same feeling that moved Addison to make an end of Sir Roger de Coverley. Foreseeing, we are told, that some nimble gentleman would catch up his pen the moment he quitted it, he said to an intimate friend, his relative Eustace Budgell probably, with a certain warmth of expression, which he was not often guilty of, "By G—, I'll kill Sir Roger that nobody else may murder him!" And so there befel "the melancholiest day for the poor people that ever happened in Worcestershire," and there was not a dry eye in the club when the old butler's letter was read with the bad news.

This extreme precaution is not always sovereign. It is a point not absolutely determined in Shakespearian chronology whether Falstaff was actually dragged from his grave to make an Elizabethan holiday. At any rate Quixote him dragged from his grave to flaunt him on the English stage by no less a person than Henry Fielding. Fielding was properly apologetic about it. He was only twenty-one when he wrote *Don Quixote in England*, and but for the solicitations of the distressed actors of Drury Lane would not have consented to its performance. For five years he had left it on the shelf conscious of the danger of the attempt to rival Cervantes, an opinion in which he was confirmed by Mr.

Booth and Mr. Colley Cibber. Yet was it with an adventure not wholly dissimilar that Fielding embarked upon his true career as a novelist. For *Joseph Andrews* was conceived as a satirical sequel to *Pamela*, and Samuel Richardson's feelings towards Fielding were in consequence about as amiable as Cervantes's to "Avellaneda." Nor has Falstaff been left altogether at peace in Arthur's bosom. You will find a letter of Lamb to Coleridge warmly recommending a new volume of *Original Letters of Falstaff*. That sounds a pretty rash adventure, and you might be astonished at Lamb's commendations if you did not remember that James White, the author, was at Christ's Hospital with Lamb, and how good a friend Lamb was. Lamb genially suggested to Coleridge that he might get the book puffed in the reviews. Though a great critic, Lamb was very human. Very likely, as he told Coleridge, these letters were far superior to *Falstaff's Wedding* by a Dr. Kendrick.

The real excuse for such usage is that characters like Quixote and Falstaff become a substantial part of the world's heritage. Their authors really are creators, to use the cant term with which commonplace novelists comfort themselves against the critic's contempt. It is in its way a tribute to the creative gift of Cervantes that Fielding should have written about Quixote in England, just as he might have written about Peter the Hermit in England, if only he had known as much about Peter the Hermit as about Don Quixote. Few historical characters are so real to us as the Quixotes and Falstaffs. Mr. Justin McCarthy's notion of a *Donna Quixote* was, by the bye, anticipated by *The Female Quixote* of Charlotte Lenox (Dr. Johnson's friend), to which Fielding devoted two laudatory columns in his *Covent Garden Journal*.

Balzac had a characteristic idea of

writing a sequel to Molière's *Tartuffe*, in order to show how dull the household was after the expulsion of the hypocrite. Molière himself was not given to sequels, and it is surely no wonder that he left *Tartuffe* alone, seeing what a storm the play roused against him in the religious world. Molière, however, should have been used to storms. There had been no small ado after the performance of *L'École des Femmes*. To that play Molière did write a kind of sequel. He made privately among his friends such dramatic fun of his critics, that the Abbé Dubuisson suggested he might make a play of them. And he did ; he put his critics on the boards, and *La Critique de l'École des Femmes* ran merrily at the Palais Royal Theatre for thirty-one nights. A man named Boursault replied with *Le Portrait du Peintre*. Molière, at the personal suggestion of Louis the Fourteenth, rejoined with *L'Impromptu de Versailles*. Not even the interposition of the King put an end to the quarrel, for a certain De Villiers still returned to the attack with *La Vengeance des Marquis*. It was veritably a war of sequels. It is, perhaps, the pleasantest thing that one knows about the Grand Monarch, that as a boy he had his ears boxed by Mazarin for reading Scarron's novels on the sly, and that in his maturity he was so good a friend to Molière.

Thackeray has told us in one of the pleasantest of his *Round-about Papers* how familiarly he lived with the heroes and heroines of fiction : how he would love to welcome Mignon and Margaret ; how gladly would he see Dugald Dalgetty and Ivanhoe stepping in at the open window from his little garden ; and Uncas and noble old Leatherstocking gliding in silently ; and Athos, Porthos, and Aramis swaggering in, curling their moustaches ; and dearest Amelia Booth on Uncle Toby's arm ; and Crummles's company of comedians with the Gil Blas troupe ; and Sir

Roger de Coverley and the greatest of crazy gentlemen, the Knight of La Mancha with his blessed squire. A pretty skill in parody testified to his intimacy. Somewhere, I think, he mooted a proposal for a novel to deal altogether with the leading characters of other novels. The method after all is as legitimate as Lucian's and Landor's.

To create characters so much alive is the main business of the novelist, more so even (as M. Daudet has remarked with a pardonable fling at the Flaubertists) than to write fine prose. M. Daudet has confessed the thrill of paternal pride with which he has heard people in the crowd say, "Why, he is a Tartarin," or "a Delobelle." He called his own Tartarin a Quixote of Southern France. For such characters not only live ; they beget descendants. Hamlet begat Werther, and Werther René, and René Obermann, till at the present day the family of Hamlets is past counting. And the Quixotes are nearly as numerous as the Hamlets. Hudibras, and Sir Roger de Coverley, and Uncle Toby, and Dr. Syntax, and Colonel Newcome, and Mr. Pickwick are all descendants of Don Quixote. Thus is Tartarin of Tarascon kin to Mr. Pickwick.

M. Daudet, if all he says be true, had as good reason to leave Tartarin alone as Molière had to leave Tartuffe. The wrath of Tarascon was notorious. This resentment of a whole town lay heavy on M. Daudet's spirit ; safe in Paris, he could yet see in his mind's eye, when the good citizens opened their shops of a morning and beat their carpets on the banks of the Rhone, how the fists would clench in his direction and the dark eyes flash. One angry man of Tarascon actually penetrated to Paris on a mission of vengeance ; and if a friend of the novelist had not distracted the provincial's attention in a whirl of Parisian excitement, heaven knows what might have happened. Yet in spite of this strong local feeling, M.

Daudet dared to write a sequel ; and, whatever Tarascon may have felt about it, Tartarin's other friends were delighted with the fresh tidings of him ; for Tartarin in the Alps was quite his old delightful self, and his mountaineering exploits were Tartarin-esque to the last degree.

M. Daudet used to give Tarascon a wide berth when he was travelling south. One day, however, journeying with his son and the Provençal poet Mistral, he found to his horror the train stopping at the fatal station. "Father, how pale you are," his son said. Was it any wonder, says M. Daudet pathetically ! Over and over again threats had reached him of what would happen to him if he ever dared to set foot in Tarascon. A commercial traveller, who had for a joke signed "Alphonse Daudet" in the visitors' book of his hotel, had been mobbed, and came within an ace of being ducked in the Rhone. Well might the poor author turn pale. If it had been one man he had to deal with, even Tartarin himself in all his exotic panoply, he might have faced it ;—but a whole townful, and the Rhone so deep and rapid ! Verily a romancer's life was not a bed of roses. When the train stopped and the travellers got out of the station, lo and behold ! not a soul was in the place. Tarascon was a desert, the people, as it turned out, having followed Tartarin a-colonising to Port Tarascon. And thus it was that yet another Tartarin sequel came to be written. That was how the perfidious novelist finally avenged himself on the exasperated town, and how Tartarin's great heart came to be broken, and the reader's with it.

Beaumarchais was another writer who was encouraged by the success of a first sequel to proceed to a second, though I dare say many readers perfectly familiar with *The Barber of Seville* and *Figaro's Marriage* have hardly heard of *La Mère Coupable*, the second sequel, in which the immortal Figaro degenerated into respectability and dulness. But if the

second sequel was a failure, the first is perhaps the most successful on record. *Figaro's Marriage*, besides being a famous comedy, is acknowledged to be better than *The Barber* to which it was sequel. It was the *Marriage* that Mozart, having first choice, chose for his opera, leaving *The Barber* to Rossini. Assuredly this is the sequel with the most famous history ; it is really a vivacious page of the history of France. It was a saying at the time, that great as was the cleverness it took to write *Figaro's Marriage*, it took a great deal more cleverness to get it acted. Possibly M. Daudet's fervid imagination had something to do with his trouble with Tarascon. Cervantes's trouble with the sham Quixote may be regarded by a Philistine world as a storm in the literary tea-cup. But the difficulties of *Figaro's Marriage* were affairs of State, and its production a political event presaging and helping actually to precipitate the French Revolution. It was not without obstacles and delays that *The Barber* had been brought to a performance. Accepted by the Comédie Française in 1772, it was put off from Carnival to Carnival, first owing to the dramatist's quarrel with the Duc de Chaulnes, and afterwards to his quarrel with the Parliament, and was not played until 1775, when it failed completely. People had heard so much talk about the precious *Barber* that when he came they found him prolix and disappointing. Beaumarchais, nothing daunted, revised it, cutting it down to four acts (the Barber had been drawn and quartered, said the wags,) and advertising it as "*The Barber of Seville*, Comedy in Four Acts, Played and Damned at the Théâtre Français." This time it was brilliantly successful, and had an unusual run.

These troubles however were child's play to the stormy career of the sequel. That was a veritable duel of the dramatist with principalities and powers. Beaumarchais had against him the police, the magistracy, the

ministry, and the King himself. The play was ready for performance in 1781. The police authorities read it, and perceiving at once its dangerous tendencies in the unsettled state of France, prohibited the performance. Thereupon Beaumarchais threw himself heart and soul into a campaign of intrigue to procure the license. The memoirs of the time are full of the affair with all the moves and counter-moves. Beaumarchais circulated a saying of Figaro's that "only little men were afraid of little writings," and, flattering the courtier's foible of independence, won over several leading personages in society to protect and befriend his Barber. There was the Count d'Artois, the personal friend of the Queen, the Baron de Breteuil, Madame de Polignac and her set, and M. de Vaudreuil. Then he set cleverly to work to pique the curiosity of society and the court. It became the fashion to give readings of *Figaro's Marriage* in drawing-rooms. Society talked of nothing else. Everywhere people were to be heard saying, "I have just been," or "I am just going" to a reading of Beaumarchais's new play. The King himself at last could no longer resist the growing curiosity. He sent to M. Le Noir, the lieutenant of police, for the manuscript. One morning when Madame Campan entered the Queen's private room, she found the King and Queen alone, and a chair placed in front of a table with a pile of papers on it. "It is Beaumarchais's comedy," said the King. "I want you to read it. It is difficult to read in places by reason of the erasures and interlineations; but I desire that the Queen should hear it. You are not to mention this reading to a soul." So Madame Campan began, and as she read, the King kept exclaiming at the bad taste of passage after passage; and when she came to Figaro's monologue, with its attack on the administration, especially the tirade against the State prisons, he leaped to his feet crying: "It is detestable; it shall never be played!

We should have to pull down the Bastille to prevent the consequences. The fellow makes a mock of everything that should command respect." "It is not to be played then?" asked the Queen. "Certainly not," replied Louis. "Of that you may rest assured." And Beaumarchais outside was saying with unabashed audacity, "So the King refuses his permission; very well, then, my play *shall* be performed." He was confident of winning in the end, and that success was only a matter of time. Society was also sanguine about it, and bets were freely offered on the event. Beaumarchais's backers, continuing to count on success despite the King's refusal, distributed the parts to the Comédie Française; and taking advantage of the tacit good will of the Count d'Artois, M. de la Ferté lent them the stage of the Hôtel des Menus Plaisirs, the King's own particular theatre. The rehearsals were almost public. Tickets were issued for a performance on the 12th of June, 1783. Carriages were already arriving, the hall was half full, the Count d'Artois was on his way from Versailles, when an order arrived from the King, who had heard of the affair for the first time that morning, forbidding the performance. Great was the general disappointment, and the King's action was keenly resented. Madame Campan says that not even during the days immediately preceding the downfall of the throne were the words "oppression" and "tyranny" more in people's mouths. Beaumarchais, once more baffled, was furious. "Very well, gentlemen," he cried. "So my piece is not to be played here! Well, I swear that played it shall be, if it has to be played in the choir of Notre Dame."

The King, perhaps foreseeing the end, had said upon one occasion, "You will see, Beaumarchais will prove stronger than the authorities." Well, only three months after the last incident a private performance was given by the Comédie Française before

three hundred spectators at the house of M. de Vaudreuil. The Queen was not well enough to be present, but the Count d'Artois was there and the Duchess de Polignac. The performance was winked at upon the pretext that the objectionable passages were to have been excised. Madame Campan's father-in-law, who was there, hearing all the incriminated passages delivered, while everybody kept repeating that they had been cut out, shrugged his shoulders and quoted the well-known remark of the mystified Basile in *The Barber*, "Faith, gentlemen, I don't know which of us is being cheated, but the whole world seems to be in the plot." The points which told most against society, society most vigorously applauded. Beaumarchais was beside himself with his triumph. Madame Vigée Lebrun, an eye-witness, has described how, when somebody complained of the heat, he went round breaking the windows with his cane; hence came the phrase, *Qu'il avait doulement cassé les vitres*.

Encouraged by so much applause and complicity, Beaumarchais chose to construe a vague private remark of M. de Breteuil into an official permission, and boldly arranged a public performance for February 1784. Again M. le Noir and the police were compelled formally to interfere, and the performance once more was stopped. But the siege was on the point of being raised. The King at length withdrew his veto, being apparently sanguine enough to believe, after all that had taken place, that the play would be damned on its merits; and on the 27th of April, 1784, the performance took place.

The excitement was indescribable. Princes of the Blood tumbled over each other in their eagerness for tickets. The author was inundated with personal solicitations from the highest ranks. The Duchesse de Bourbon's footmen waited at the box office from eleven in the morning till four o'clock in the afternoon. Great ladies were

smuggled into actresses' boxes, taking their dinner with them. Three hundred persons dined at the theatre for fear of losing their places. The performance was very long, but it was one long triumph. The piece ran for over a hundred nights, a run then unprecedented. Beaumarchais, a passed master in the art of advertisement, knew how to keep up the excitement. He took advantage of an application by some ladies for a *loge grillée* to reply, in a letter addressed to a supposititious duke and carefully made public, that he had no consideration for ladies who could demean themselves to view in secret a piece they thought improper. This letter proved a most successful advertisement. When the play reached its fiftieth night, Beaumarchais invented the "charitable performance." He chose "nursing mothers" as the objects of the charity, Rousseauism being the fashion.

Even in the height of Beaumarchais's triumph, the King did him one more bad turn. The dramatist got into controversy about his charitable performance with an anonymous antagonist. That antagonist, unfortunately for him, happened to be the future Louis the Eighteenth, who, stung by Beaumarchais's sharp tongue, appealed to the King. Louis was playing cards at the time. He scrawled on one of the cards an order committing Beaumarchais to St. Lazare, the common prison for thieves and prostitutes; and so the literary lion of the hour was dragged off from a fashionable supper party and thrown into gaol, there to remain for six days amidst the scum of Paris, and then to be liberated without any charge being preferred. It was a monstrous outrage; but Beaumarchais had his revenge. In the first place the King had to pay him compensation to the tune of 2,150,000 livres. But there was other compensation dearer to an author's heart. A performance of *The Barber of Seville* was actually given at the Petit Trianon by the Queen's private com-

pany, the Queen herself acting Rosine, the Count d'Artois Figaro, and M. de Vaudreuil Almaviva; and the author was invited! Even Beaumarchais must have been satisfied.

Figaro's Marriage was, as I have said, more than a theatrical triumph; it was a political event. You may read it to-day, and find it an amusing play, but with little in it calculated, as you might think, to upset a constitution. But so electrical was the atmosphere that every allusion to the failings of the ruling classes or the institutions of the State became charged with significance. It is matter of history that it helped to precipitate the revolution. Napoleon said that Figaro was the revolution already in action.

The suggestion for this sequel also, by the way, came from without. It was the Prince of Conti who first put the idea into Beaumarchais's head. Figaro's creator took heart and soul to the idea; he had so vivid a conception of his Figaro (who, be it said, bore a strong family resemblance to himself) that he had no difficulty in imagining the versatile barber in the more complicated situations proposed by the Prince. There you have the secret of the sequel in a nutshell. When a character is so real to the author that he spontaneously imagines him in fresh situations, and divines how he will behave therein, the difficulty of the sequel is solved. Thackeray has described the close intimacy in which he lived with the characters of his novels. He was afraid people would say, "What a poverty of friends the man has! He is always asking us to meet those Pendennises and Newcomes." When he was asked why he married Esmond to Lady Castlewood, his answer was,—"I didn't; they did it themselves." There are a dozen similar stories of Balzac. Once Balzac accosted his sister with all the importance of a gossip bursting with a piece of news: "What do you think? Félix de Vandenesse is going to be married,

and to one of the Grandvilles, too—a capital match!" Some readers interested in the air of "a man with a past" worn by Captain de Jordy in the novel *Ursule Mirouet*, once appealed to Balzac to tell them what this past has been. Balzac reflected seriously, then remembered that he had not known De Jordy till he came to live at Nemours. And another time, when Jules Sandeau was speaking of his sister's illness, Balzac interrupted him with the absent-mindedness of genius and suggested that they should come back to real life and discuss Eugénie Grandet. Such a real world to Balzac was his *Comédie Humaine*; and that of course is the secret of its producing, in spite of its many marvellous characters and melodramatic occurrences, so strong an illusion of reality on the mind of the reader. The *Comédie Humaine* is a system of sequels and interlacing narratives. The careers of some of the characters, as of Lucien de Rubempré and to some extent of Vautrin, may be traced in a strict series of sequels. The lives of other personages the reader has to piece together from several novels; a biography, for example, of Maxime de Trailles has to be collected from very nearly a dozen. The student of Balzac almost feels as if he were engaged in original research. The same system to a less elaborate extent was employed by Trollope in those lifelike scenes of clerical life, the *Chronicles of Barsetshire*, and also in his political tales. Indeed Trollope was even more successful almost than Balzac in producing a convincing representation of a substantial world.

Thackeray, for all the company he kept with his Pendennises and Newcomes, did not indulge much in the sequel proper. *The Virginians* is the one example, and in quality it is but a typical sequel for *Esmond*. It contains, however, in the age of the Baroness Bernstein as sequel to the youth of Beatrix Esmond perhaps the cleverest and cruellest development of

character in the whole range of sequels. Nor did Dickens write sequels, the ineffectual reappearance of the Wellers in *Master Humphrey's Clock* being, I think, his sole effort in that direction. Nor did Sir Walter, for *The Abbot* is really a distinct novel from *The Monastery*. Scott's great French successor, on the other hand, the inexhaustible and unconfined Dumas, would carry his sequels through the centuries with amazing vivacity and success. Dumas's secret, you would say, was rather fecundity of invention than the vitality of his individual characters. Yet as you say so, Chicot and the Musketeers rush to your recollection. Chicot's vitality is so considerable, that a successful novel about him has been produced in France within the last few weeks, and the Musketeers are alive enough for anything. A friend of mine who loves each member of this fine Quadruple Alliance, though perhaps he loves Porthos best, is for ever challenging me to produce from the superior pages of novelists who affect to despise incident a finer achievement in character-drawing than the gradual individualisation and divergence of the four characters in the course of the years covered by the eleven volumes. It is a challenge that I have never met to his, nor indeed to my own satisfaction. Are not in truth these Musketeers sufficient of their sole selves to take away the reproach from sequels for ever? One would like to clinch the question by claiming the *Odyssey* as a sequel to the *Iliad*, but between us and that devout consummation flow floods of German ink.

When we acquiesce in the common condemnation of the sequel, I suppose it is hardly of Don Quixote or Figaro or of Balzac or Dumas that we are thinking, but rather of the more ordinary run of sequels, of the thousand and one mechanical continuations wherein industry takes the place of inspiration. Even with so competent a craftsman as Lytton the spirit flags

after the five hundredth page. Nay, with a writer of genius like George Sand, after three volumes of *Consuelo* the ordinary reader gladly leaves the *Comtesse de Rudolstadt* upon her shelf. That there is a special danger and difficulty about the sequel, there is no denying. The sequel is likely to disappoint expectations, for the very reason that there are expectations to disappoint. The writer is handicapped by his own record; as Scott said of Campbell, he is afraid of the shadow that his own fame casts before him. The original book robs its successor of the advantage of novelty, and at the same time fixes a difficult standard of comparison. It is not easy to imagine cleverer sequels than *Alice through the Looking-Glass* and *Tartarin sur les Alpes*. If they stand in estimation below the original *Tartarin* and *Alice in Wonderland*, it can surely only be because they necessarily had not the captivating freshness of the earlier books. Herein lies the difficulty of the sequel. And the danger is the temptation to yield to demands from without or the desire from within, and to try to repeat a success mechanically and without inspiration. The most notable example, because following the most notable success, is the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Bunyan tried to repeat his success; but Christiana was always Christian's worser half, and her personally conducted tour is but a poor reflection of her husband's pilgrimage. Many of us may have read recently in Lowell's correspondence, how his friend's and admirers kept urging him to resuscitate Hosea Biglow and to continue the *Biglow Papers*. He was so simple as to try, he said, but found that he could not. When afterwards he did write a belated *Biglow Paper*, it was clean against his critical judgment. "For" said he, "I don't believe in resuscitations. We hear no good of the posthumous Lazarus."

W. P. J.

DITAS.

"Is the prairie on fire, Manuelo?"

It was Ditas Patronez who asked the question as the family were sitting down together to the evening meal. For this was the Mexican custom inherited and cherished with more than Spanish conscientiousness from the days of old Spain, that the family and a few of the retainers should eat together seated according to their degree; a shoot of feudalism pushed a long way West.

"You've a good nose, Ditas, to smell that, and the wind the way it is," her cousin replied, glancing at her with suspicion.

"How could it have caught light, I wonder," she replied answering him with equal suspicion. "Have you seen the Señor Inglese?"

"It's no wonder it should catch fire, I should think, Ditas, when we haven't had rain this twenty months. As for the Señor Inglese I should think you were more likely to know where he is than I."

Ditas did not answer him but began to occupy herself with the plate of hashed mutton and the boiled maize which had been passed down to her. It would have been a grave breach of etiquette in that household for one to begin to eat before old Pedro Patronez, the father and head of the family, had helped all round the table and had commenced his own meal. So all had sat with the meat steaming and cooling before them while they watched this little passage of arms between the cousins. The father was deaf but his faculties were alert enough. "Eh, eh," he said, "what was Manuelo saying,—that the prairie was on fire?"

"Yes, sir," the young man answered. "I saw it as I came from driving the horses in for the branding."

"In which direction?"

"Eastward, sir, and north, towards the Rio Grande."

"It won't come near us then, unless the wind changes."

"The wind won't change, sir, at this time of year."

"Where is the Englishman, I wonder? Who has seen him?" the old man asked with some anxiety.

No one answered for a minute, then Ditas said quickly, "He went out with you, Manuelo, this morning."

"That was a long while ago," said the young man sulkily. "We had dinner at Oxener's camp. I have not seen him since."

"He started east from there in the direction of the river, Señor," one of the retainers volunteered from the foot of the table.

"Did he?" replied Manueo, as if he were very little grateful for the information.

Then Ditas glanced quickly at her father.

"Eh, eh, towards the river, did he? I hope he won't get caught in the fire. He wouldn't know what to do in a fire."

"Oh, he'll be all right, sir: he's got a very good horse, that bay with the white on his forehead; and there's the river always down wind."

"And the banks of the river are like cliffs; you know it as well as I do, Manueo," the old man said severely.

Manuelo was abashed. He made no answer, but under his breath he said sullenly, "I should be sorry if we lost the horse."

Ditas looked at him reproachfully, but her two brothers, mere lads, who sat one beside her and one beside Manueo, laughed covertly at his remark. "He'll be done if he's caught;

he can't ride a bit," one of the boys said.

"No, nor shoot either."

"And he's no use at all with a rope," the first added.

"Be quiet, Juan," Ditas said. "If father hears you there'll be no more supper for you to-night."

"Oh—you!" said her brother scornfully. "Of course you're always defending him."

At which the hot blood flew to her face and she bent silently over her plate, Manuelo observing her with keen displeasure.

As soon as supper was over Ditas went away by herself and played with her little gray hawk which lived, chained by the leg, in the pepper-tree outside her window. The little hawk was peacefully sleeping, with its head under its wing, in the starlit odorous night. Yet the little hawk it was, and not any remarkable powers of scent on her own part, that had told Ditas of the prairie-fire. For when she had looked at the bird in the afternoon he was flapping his little wings and tugging at his chain. Ditas knew the signs. The little hawk had never seen a prairie-fire, for Ditas had had him since he was a baby, but he inherited the blood of thousands of ancestors to whom such fires were familiar, who had known well what it was to hunt the wretched scorched-out gophers and lizards among the flames and the smoke. So the smell of the burning spoke to the inherited instincts of the little hawk, though he was too tiny to catch a thing much bigger than a humming-bird, and a humming-bird was too quick even for his lightning dashes. "So the fire is over, *pajarcito*?" Ditas whispered to him, and the little bird drew a quick glancing head from beneath his wing and, seeing before him well-known black eyes as brilliant as his own, put back his head to sleep again, satisfied.

Then the girl went to her room. She had the rare privilege, in Mexican households, of a room to herself, be-

cause she was the only daughter. She looked out into the silent night, all the more deeply silent for the myriad-winged hum of insects, and listened expectant for the deep dull thud of the unshod horse cantering home over the prairie. But all was still. If she blushed, none saw it on her beautiful dark face; if she prayed to the Saints for the Englishman whom she loved, the answer was not audible. At rare intervals a chorus of *coyotes* came from a distant patch of ebony trees, a few fireflies danced over the tremulous feathers of the pepper-tree. For the rest the starlit stillness was unbroken.

Meanwhile the Englishman had found some new sensations for himself that day. He had gone from Oxener's camp, as the retainer had said of him, eastward towards the river, to look for the horses which were to be driven into the corral for the branding. Much of what the brothers of Ditas had said of him he would have admitted to be true. He could not ride. He would not have said so when he came out to Mexico a few months ago; he would even have been very angry with any one who had dared to say it of him. He was a good rider to hounds, judged by the English standard; but now he knew the Mexican standard, and, judged by that, had to own that he was lamentably wanting. He could not ride a *broncho* that had never been crossed before, and after three hours of diabolical cruelty bring him in nearly dead, it is true, but sufficiently broken for practical purposes. Neither could he shoot. He could kill rocketing pheasants or driven partridges rather better than most men; but he could not put all the bullets of a six-barrelled revolver into a thin tree-stem as he went at full gallop past it, and this is what they meant by shooting. As for a rope, as they called it, meaning a lasso, he had not seen such a thing until he came to Mexico, and beheld with the awe of ignorant wonder the marvels which Ditas' friends wrought with it. It did not astonish

him, he told himself, that she despised him.

Another thing he had not seen until this day, a prairie-fire. It came upon him with a sense of an uneasy hotness in the air, a certain restlessness which he caught from his horse, who knew far more about it than he knew. Then he wondered, while these slight signs grew more emphatic. A few minutes, and birds began to pass him, a *coyote* galloped across his path, a wild turkey scurried by at a hard trot ; even the Englishman, ignorant as he was of the ways of the live things of the country, began to marvel. A sort of low humming sounded from windward ; his horse began to snort and grew unmanageable, seeming to be infected by the down-wind race of all live things, edging away from his north-easterly track, and making more directly eastward. He was indifferent, the *bronchos* were as likely to be eastward as northward, and let the horse go. Presently it broke into a canter, then into a gallop ; moths, bats, nocturnal insects, creatures of all kinds, began to fly past him through the bright sunlight as in a nightmare, and after them dashed all the smaller kind of predatory birds, the cousins-german of Ditas' little hawk. The air grew more and more sultry, and laden with a sulphurous breath. Looking behind him, over the haunches of his now racing horse, he saw a dense thickness, as of fog. Above the density rose a whitish cloud-line ; through the density flashed tongues of light ; at last a sense of what was upon him dawned : he was flying from a prairie-fire.

As he realised the fact the instinct of the fleeing animals grew infectious for him too. He was all in accord now with his horse's terror, and the rider urged on the pace which he had endeavoured to restrain before. The wind from the west blew with steady strength. The humming sound increased until it became a roar, louder and louder with each mile that he galloped, while still the stream of living things went before it. The

smoke grew dark over the face of the sky, the flames and the density came nearer and nearer ; still he galloped on. He bethought him of all that he had read in the pages of Mayne Reid and the other writers who had been the delight of his youth. To kindle a fire of his own before him, and shelter himself on the burnt patch thus left barren for the hunger of the pursuing flames, was a scheme which occurred to him, but he dreaded the delay which it would occasion. He knew vaguely that the river was somewhere eastward, and the influence of the terror of the live things who shared his flight was too powerful. He galloped on. Now he saw the broken line of the steep bank of the river and with the sight a new danger presented itself, for the banks, as he knew, were precipitous of crumbling earth. How could his horse descend them, or how could he check his horse in order to dismount and climb down ? A patch of ebony trees was to the south, and there he knew the land sloped gently to the river, where it lay in placid cool green peace with the turtles floating on its stream ; but there, too, the fringe of prairie grass grew higher, the fire found better fodder, and already there was a wall of flying smoke and flame to shut off that place of refuge. Still he galloped on, and now the smoke and the lurid heat were but some quarter of a mile in his rear. His horse's flanks were heaving with its race, but not a mile before him was the river. A few moments more and the flames and smoke were thick around him, and he and the horse almost on the river-brink. He tugged desperately at the reins, but the horse paid no heed, blind and senseless with terror. They were on the verge of the cliff now ; below was the calm blissful water. He shut his eyes and gripped firmly with his knees expecting the fatal fall, when to his surprise he felt a slipping, gentle descent, a struggling of his horse as the pace slackened ; and then, before he realised what had befallen, the yielding bank had given

way beneath their weight, and horse and rider were struggling in the water. The next instant he was thrown off into the stream. He disengaged himself from his horse, and found himself standing, sinking, swimming in the river, as the water washed away masses of the earth which they had brought down with them. The horse swam away from him down the stream, and he was left, now standing, now swimming, while the smoke went curling over his head and the baulked flames stopped and died away harmless, save for a few fiery missile brands which they shot at him out in the stream.

And so the peril was over. He had but to wait, in the cooling waters, until the fire had burned away and he could safely climb back to land. There were no crocodiles so far up the river. He was safe. As he realised his safety the reaction nearly overcame him, and he had need to summon all his fortitude to save him from permitting himself to be carried helplessly down the stream. And then through the afternoon and all through the still night, over the blackened prairie he walked sadly and steadily homeward to the *hacienda*, which he reached with boots charred and sooty as the *vacqueros* were just setting out on their morning's work.

He slept in a room off the central court-yard of the *hacienda*. It was not a bright room, for it had no window; its occupants went to bed by the light of the stars peeping in through the open door. In each corner of the room slept a man, Manuelo in one, the Englishman in another, and Ditas' two brothers in the other two. Mosquito-netting over each bed lent an air of decency, and there were washing-basins. Into this plain apartment the Englishman stole, as the dawn crept up over the prairie.

"You're late home," Manuelo observed drily.

"Slightly," the Englishman said. Then he threw himself on his bed and slept the sleep of the wearied until

hard on the hour for the mid-day meal.

"Got caught in the fire?" old Patronez asked him.

"Yes," he answered. "The horse came back, I hear. I am glad of that."

"We are more glad that you came back, Señor," the host replied gallantly.

"Was I the only one caught?"

"The only one; not even a *broncho* was caught that we could learn. Manuelo fell in with the bands to windward."

"Ah! you were to windward, Manuelo?" This was Ditas' simple remark, but the tone in which it was said made all around the table glance up at her in surprise.

Little more was said of the fire then; they were not unusual things, scarcely worthy of comment; but after the meal was over and most were taking a *siesta* in the shade, Ditas came to the Englishman. "It is not well for you to be to leeward of Manuelo when the prairie is so dry," she said.

"What do you mean?" he asked quickly.

"I have said it. You are warned," she answered oracularly. "You have escaped once. Do not let him have the chance again."

"You think, then—" he began; but before he had finished a sentence she was gone. "No," she answered lightly, as she fled, "I do not think; I know."

She had given the Englishman plenty to think of at all events. He had never been able to quite analyse his feeling for Ditas, nor hers for him. He had a notion that she must despise him because he could not ride, nor shoot, nor lasso beasts as her brothers and Manuelo could. But if it were possible that Ditas' alternations of apparent coldness and interest had another origin, then a light was thrown on Manuelo's probable attitude towards himself; for Manueo's attitude towards her needed no light to be thrown on it. He was the lover, in the undisguised yet dignified

Spanish style, of his beautiful cousin. And Ditas' feeling was supposed to be reciprocal. Hitherto the Englishman's relations to Manuolo had seemed to him purely those of business; for though he was out here as the guest of old Patronez, working out a return for part of his hospitality by labour on the *ranch*, yet his real business was with Manuolo, who was representative of the older branch of the family owning the mines back in the foothills which it was the Englishman's special mission to inspect. He had come out a month or two before, with the iron-bound boxes for carrying home samples of the ore. He had now these boxes filled, under seal and lock and key beneath his bed. The mines had been thoroughly inspected. It was a constant reproach to him on Manuolo's part that he would tell nothing of the report which he should make to his employers, the English capitalists who might buy the mine. Manuolo might have augured ill from his secrecy, but in truth it was but a part of his English nature. What his opinion of the mines might be Manuolo did not know; he only knew that this secret man had the samples of ore tightly locked and safely kept in that room in which they slept.

The day after the fire, Manuolo left the *ranch*, and went up into the mountains to the mines.

As the days drew on, the Englishman felt that he could no longer with decency prolong his visit. Already he had well out-stayed the limit which he had mentally fixed for himself on his arrival. He was scarcely conscious of the attraction which had kept him lingering on in that fairy-land of humming-birds and fireflies and all fair sights and scents. When he did grow conscious that the attraction was Ditas, the necessity grew but the more patent for breaking it. He must go; the idea that there was anything of a mutual feeling was absurd; he must go before the tie grew more binding.

These great *haciendas* in the midst

of a desolation as big as an English county are places of rest and refreshment for all and sundry; all are welcome. The Englishman knew nothing of the customs. He knew not whether to offer payment for the hospitality he had received, but in the end his tact saved him from this blunder. He thanked his host with the gratitude owed to free hospitality and went his way, resolved to send out from England a present which should be something in the way of a return.

Old Patronez sent him in the waggon a day's journey across the prairie, to the station where he could take the narrow-gauge train. In the body of the waggon were his boxes of ore and his personal luggage. By Ditas, as he parted from her, he had sent a farewell message to Manuolo, who was still at the mines. What was the strange look in Ditas' lovely dark Spanish eyes? he asked himself, as he said farewell. Had he answered the question aright, he might never have set out on his journey.

"You will keep a look-out as you drive," she said. "I cannot think what Manuolo is doing. He knows you are going."

"How do you know that he knows?" the Englishman asked.

"I know many things," she answered lightly. "My little hawk tells them me."

"Good-bye," he said. "You will write to me sometimes in England?"

"*Adios!* Yes, if you will write to me." It seemed to the Englishman that her eyes were swimming as she said the words; but it might have been but the swimming in his own which obscured his clear vision. "Good-bye!" He choked down a sob and sprang into the waggon.

Then all through the day, behind the team of six great mules, they jolted and toiled over the prairie, now and again dipping into a clump of ebony, variegated by the white cluster of the San Paolo palm, which has deluded so many a traveller by its

likeness to a whitened chimney-top. In the end they came about sun-down to the little station, without a sight of a human being save a horseman, fully armed, Mexican fashion, with sword and pistol as well as rifle, ambling along on a pacing horse.

They were an hour and a half in advance of the train, if the latter were punctual, which was improbable. It grew dark. The Mexican women at their little orange-booths lighted their torch-fires. At length a growing bustle betokened the approach of the time for the train. The station became thinly peopled, chiefly with loiterers come to enjoy the spectacle. The Englishman "expressed" his portmanteau and his precious boxes, keeping charge himself of his hand-luggage. Presently the train steamed in. He stepped on board, with his eyes blinking in the unaccustomed gaslight. He went into the Pullman car, where he found a vacant compartment and sat down to await with patience the pleasure of the porter in getting ready his sleeping-berth. He glanced at his fellow-passengers with the incurious eye of a constant traveller, then gave himself over to his thoughts in which Ditas played a cruelly large part. Even now the temptation was strong on him to get off at the next station and go back to try his fortune with her; yet still,—no,—surely her certain scorn of him as a lover would be harder to bear than her tolerance of him as a friend. For an hour he sat so, heedless of the lapse of time; suddenly a thrilling voice (was it the voice of a dream or of his waking sense?) sounded at his very ear, "Señor!"

He started and looked round. Leaning over to him from the seat behind, was the bent figure, shrouded in mantilla, of what seemingly was an old Mexican lady.

"Heavens!" he exclaimed, as he caught sight of the face which the mantilla half shrouded. "Ditas! You!"

"Hush!" she said. "Yes, it is I.

I don't know what you will think of me; I don't know what to think of myself. But Manuelo is on the train. I suspected that he would follow you, though I do not know what his object is; and I followed on his track and yours to warn you."

"Oh Ditas!" he said, in a tone which made the warm blood dye the girl's dark cheeks yet more ruddily.

"Hush!" she said, apprehensively glancing back. "I could not warn you before; he was on this car. Now he has gone back in the train. Oh, what are you going to do?" For the Englishman had risen to his feet.

"I am going to look for him," he said with determination; "to ask him what he means by thus dogging me."

"Oh no!" she said. "At least,—well, perhaps that would be as good a way as any. So at least you will meet him prepared. But do be careful!"

"Are you afraid, Ditas, that I may harm him?"

"No," she said, simply; "but that he may harm you."

"Oh, Ditas!"

"Don't speak to me like that,—in that tone," she whispered fiercely, her cheeks aflame. "If you do I shall hate myself for coming. At least I have warned you now; I shall get off at the next station."

The Englishman, cruelly abashed, said no more, but feeling that his revolver was ready to his hand started off through the train on a tour of inspection. He went through one car after another until the last one, looking searchingly at each occupant. None of them was Manuelo. He came back doubtfully to the girl. "You were wrong," he said, "he is not there." Doubt of her motive in coming was again expressed in his words.

"Do you dare not to believe me?" she asked again angrily, her face crimsoning. "Come and see for yourself then." Slowly she rose and followed him down the cars. Their

occupants returned their searching looks with interest, but there was no Manuelo.

"You see," he said when they had come to the end, "he is not there."

"It is very strange," she said thoughtfully. Suddenly she exclaimed, "Where are your boxes of the ore?"

"In the express-waggon, I suppose."

"I see! I see it all now!" she said. "It is there that we shall find Manuelo."

"There! Why? But it is all locked; the expressman is forward in the train."

"Is it locked?" she said. "We shall see!"

The Englishman, his heart beating high with excitement, climbed the rail of the hindmost car and along the footboard of the express waggon. Wonderful to say the bars and fastenings of the waggon were all hanging loosely down. The door was but pushed to; in an instant it yielded to his hand. The bright moonlight streaming in showed the figure of a man bending, working away, over an open box which the Englishman had time to recognise as one of his own before the kneeling figure turned, and the flash of a pistol for a moment blinded him, while the report echoed fiercely in the enclosed space. The Englishman felt a sharp red-hot sting in his shoulder, but unconscious of the hurt he sprang on the kneeling figure. The door swung to and they struggled in the darkness. The Spaniard wrenched himself free from the other's grip and dashed out at the door. As he jumped from the train, a second report of his pistol was followed by the shriek of a woman's voice, and at the same moment, the Englishman, dashing after him in the darkness of the waggon, struck his forehead violently on the door as it swung to again, and fell unconscious.

* * * *

"You warn't spry enough with the shooting-iron, you see," was the sound in a strong Yankee accent to which he regained his sense.

"What's happened?" he asked in a weak voice.

"Wall, you see the crittur was fixing it up to work a little improvement in the samples of that there ore you was taking home with you; got dummy keys to the boxes, I reckon. Seems he had some sorter interest in the making it as good as might be—owner of mine or something, from what they say, and he kinder got a bead on you afore you got one on him. That's what happened; but reckon you ain't hurted any."

"Where's Ditas?"

"Ditas? Oh, Ditas, that's the girl. I see! Wall, she's hurted some, I reckon; but not so bad as it might be either."

"Did she get off at the next stop?"

"Next stop? no! nor won't for several stops, I reckon. No one seemed to know where she was going, and there warn't no place to put her off, so as she would be looked after. There's a doctor on board and he's got her into a berth, the forrad berth in the car there. Perhaps you'd like to go and see how she is! You ain't hurted any. The crittur's bullet only skinned you."

The girl was lying in the lower bunk of a sleeping compartment; the upper bunk had not been let down, a rare concession to her wounded state. The bullet had passed through the upper part of her arm, injuring but not breaking the bone. Her face was very white and deathly from the loss of blood, and the long lashes of her closed eyes lay far down upon her cheeks.

"Oh, Ditas!" the young Englishman exclaimed again; and at the words the great dark eyes opened and a smile played on her face. "Oh, Ditas, and all this for my sake!"

In answer, the girl let her other hand stray feebly out over the counterpane.

"Take it, you fool!" said the doctor, as the Englishman, sorely embarrassed by this ingenuous Southern advance, hesitated.

"Where's Manuelo?" she asked in a low voice, when she was satisfied by feeling the hand she sought within hers.

"I don't know; gone—isn't he?" the Englishman asked appealing to the doctor.

"Yes; they stopped the train, but the rascal had got the start of them, I don't expect any of them was in an all-fired hurry to get within shooting distance of him either."

"But how did he get into the express-waggon!"

"How? Squared the expressman, of course. We've got him fixed up all right. He'll be handed over to what they call the law in this country at Laredo."

"I see, I see! Doctor, she'll get well, won't she?"

"Well? Of course she will. There's nothing wrong with her; lost a little blood, that's all. Where's she going to?"

"I—I don't know. She said she was going to get off at the first stop."

"Did she? Oh, well I think I'd better leave you to arrange it with her where she's going to stop off."

"Ditas," said the Englishman, as the doctor withdrew, "you didn't get off at the first stop."

"No," she said simply, "I couldn't."

"You nearly lost your life for me."

"Yes; nearly's nothing."

"Ditas," bending low over her, "will you give it to me altogether?"

A faint flush came into the pallor of her cheeks. "Are you sure you wish it?"

"Sure, my darling!"

"Hush, why didn't you speak before?"

"I didn't dare."

"Oh, stupid!" with a faint smile. "Yes, it is yours, if you will have it, for ever and ever."

"Oh, Ditas!"

THE MELANCHOLY MAN.

A STRANGE thing is melancholy, and a most subtle and illusive subject. Even Burton, with all his labour and searching, his curious knowledge and extensive citation from ancient writers, has only scratched upon the surface of this field. He has given us the physician's view of the matter ; he is more concerned in things corporal than spiritual ; he is all for hellebore and purgings of the liver. And even love, with him, is a species of disease, affecting he knows not what part of our bodies. Such materialistic doctrines are not for this age. Yet even he perceived the strange contradiction that melancholy is a sweet sadness, sometimes transporting her victim heavenwards, and again oppressing him with torment. The patient will often be unwilling to be cured of his fantasies, wherein he seems to have command of another world a world dark and mysterious but with a strange magnificence, a shadowy splendour all its own. He loves to wander with Milton away from the pitiless, obtrusive sunlight, where, in harmony with his own thoughts, the day is tempered striking through stained windows, and soft music peals along the vaulted roof. Music, indeed, is commonly his chief solace, for it is the most plastic to our mood of all the arts, and a man finds in solemn organ-chords an interpretation in consonance with the mind he brings with him. But at other times all joys, even such sober ones as these, are denied ; the world rings hollow to his ears, and he is filled with remorse for lost opportunities. An unutterable sadness haunts him, and the future looks askance at him in leaden blackness. The world seems paltry, even the visible universe has shrunk in his sight. The goal he has set before

him hitherto, fame or wealth or freedom, matters not ; it is no longer worth his winning. Idleness is a curse and a weariness ; but to what end should he work ? At such times he could endure to be healed.

It is curious how pleasant a thing sadness sometimes is ; and how some people will hug a sorrow, as a most precious possession, to their breasts. In fact, all emotions, so they be not too strong, are pleasurable ; and for that reason it will be mostly among the shallow-minded, who can seldom feel keenly, that we shall find this weak delight in self-pity. For even fear, duly modified, as in a well-told ghost-story, may be held to inspire some not unpleasing sensation, and many enjoy above all things a touch of the pathetic in their reading. We are apt to love those who pluck our heart-strings more than those who merely aim at exciting our laughter ; pathos and humour are both good things, but the former we estimate as the higher gift. We have a kind of veneration for the writer that can move us to tears. Thackeray would not be the same man in our eyes if he had not written of Colonel Newcome.

There might appear to be something selfish about this love for the pathetic in fiction ; as though the reader should feel a pleasing contrast between his own sense of security and the misfortunes of the imaginary characters in his book. But this is not so in the main. Your true novel-reader identifies himself with each prominent person he reads of, and their experiences, whether of happiness or pain, are his own for the time. For the moment he is Tom Jones, or Darsie Latimer, or David Copperfield ; and, even when the heroine steps upon the stage, he

strains his imagination to embrace also her personality. More or less, according to his capabilities, he enters into the feelings of fool and villain. It is in proportion to this quality of adaptation, of acting a part insensibly, that the power of really appreciating a romance, or, for that matter, a drama or a historical work, exists. There are some people, it is true, who can content themselves with such subsidiary qualities as erudition, or neatness of style, or power of language, but the main body look to the author's presentment of his actors. If he has drawn them so that the reader can, without violence to his reason, imagine himself in their place, and pass with them through their adventures, then he may rest assured of finding the great majority upon his side. He will be said to have created new characters. And indeed it is possibly here that the chief educational influence of the novel comes in; for as certain players are wont to carry their parts beyond the stage, so it may chance that, even after he has finished his book, our reader may still remain imbued in a sense with the virtues of hero or heroine. In this manner an author may indeed create new characters, or, at the least, regenerate old ones; and thus it is possible for men who read fiction aright insensibly to improve themselves, like men who have mixed for a time with a higher grade of companions than they commonly meet. But those who deliberately remain aloof, and refuse to become one of the party, who persist in criticising the performance solely from the outside, with a curious eye to all the established canons of art, will reap neither profit nor much enjoyment from the barren process. The critic is not likely to be reformed by a work of art. Enthusiasm is foreign to his profession. He will not be the man to laugh at your comic countryman, or burst into tears at the woes of your heroine in distress. A calm smile of approbation, as of Jove enthroned, shall suffice him, if the touch be well brought out; if indifferently,

a calm smile of contempt. The author that shall regenerate your professed critic has not yet, in all likelihood, seen the light.

It is a commonplace with some that sadness is merely a product of indigestion, and this is a view that humorous writers in particular are much inclined to affect. With certain kinds of melancholy it may doubtless be so, for as a certain kind of love is fabled to arise from fulness of bread, so also may an inferior sort of gloomy sulkiness. Or as we see sentiment and sentimentality, so may we discern a legitimate from a dyspeptic melancholy. It is true that not all men have the time to cultivate a genteel hypochondria. It is idle to expect a common ploughman to be sad for any but material reasons. Some real deficiency, such as a lack of bacon to his loaf, will be the care that penetrates to his slow mind; even a fear that such deficiency may arise in the near future will not, in general, sensibly affect his peace. It takes an intellect of some refinement to be truly melancholy. Centuries of civilisation go to form that sensitive mind, conscious that the world is out of joint, and burning with a noble discontent at things in general. Most of our great reformers have been stern, sad-faced men. The portraits of Luther, of Knox, of Cromwell, do not show us faces of the lightly humorous cast, nor sleek countenances such as Cæsar loved. About these, and about Carlyle, who from an innate sympathy felt himself designed to be the historian and apologist of such men, there lies ever a rugged, care-worn look, as of men who found the world a serious puzzle, and one that they were bound to solve in the interests of humanity. One would not ascribe the sadness of their aspect to unaided indigestion. It is notorious, indeed, that Carlyle was a martyr to dyspepsia; but it is at least equally probable that this was the result, as that it was the cause, of his melancholy. We have seen it suggested that men should train themselves, as it

were, for pathetic writing on some food of a particularly unwholesome character, but it would be degrading to suppose, even for an instant, that we owe the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* to imperfectly cooked pie-crust. If that were the case, the world might well hope to secure another *Locksley Hall* by selecting a likely poet, and feeding him conscientiously on a diet of lobster salad and unlimited muffins. We are not inclined to subscribe to such materialistic views as these. But it is true that the human organisation is a delicate piece of machinery enough, and so inextricably interwoven that one cannot without danger separate its individual parts. Body, soul, and spirit are largely interdependent, and are apt to react upon each other to an unimagined extent. It is very likely the case that a sort of nervous derangement has been in some degree responsible for a good many gloomy predictions, and that several lofty and aerial flights (as we imagine them) of the aspiring soul can be traced back in part to a fortunate condition of the stomach. But affections of the body can never be held wholly responsible for the colour of our thought. They are rather like some transparent medium through which must pass the bright rays sent forth from the soul; a sheet of glass sometimes filmed with dust, sometimes of imperfect nature and sending forth a distorted image, rarely indeed pure and clean and altogether free from fault, but which can never do aught but reproduce, in a more or less mutilated form, the figure thrown upon it by the creative power.

The rival camps of the optimist and the pessimist divide the world. It is true, perhaps, that it is mainly a matter of health to which of these two sides the individual man attaches himself. It is noticeable that the former will commonly reproach the latter for a bilious and acrid discontent; and that these will retort upon the dull, eupeptic happiness of their opponents. The world will in general

believe the brains to lie with the man who is satisfied at nothing, and thinks your cheery, careless sort a good fellow certainly, but little better than a fool in intellect. In fact, it is easier to attack than to defend, and the sneering critic will usually make a more brilliant appearance than the good-natured friend. Again, the cynic's tub has now become a well-cushioned elbow-chair, and the trade of the pessimist has grown so inviting that many men have adopted it who have nothing much to complain of at heart. They enjoy startling their neighbours with evil omens, with fearful predictions; and with a certain pride they point to the decay of their race, and compare the present state of British morality, or hardihood, or enterprise, with the past. They affect to mourn our decline, but they are not without a subtle consolation in the thought that they have for some time seen the slow sapping of the foundations to which it may be attributed. On the whole, if they are not too serious in their opinions, they play a pleasant enough part. The pain which any chance fulfilment of their prophecies may inflict upon the nation is mitigated in their case by a consciousness of superior wisdom. They are like men who have betted a small amount against their own horse; whatever turn affairs may take, their money is safe. It is a common plan with some people thus to hedge, as it were, against a possible disappointment. They school themselves to believe still that the worst will happen, and by this means discount in anticipation the pain that such a misfortune will bring to them. The process may be pleasing to themselves, but it is extremely painful to their friends. It is something of a damper to the spirits to have a companion who persistently expects unhappiness. Such a man cannot be cheerful himself, neither is he a great incitement to cheerfulness in others. It must seem almost criminal, we think, in his eyes, that in the face of all that is hanging over us, we should thus

affect gaiety and light-heartedness ; and, for fear of offending him, we subdue ourselves with difficulty to a dull decorum. There is, indeed, more than a suspicion of selfishness in this variety of sadness, as though a man should have all the world walk stiffly because he himself is clothed in armour, or insist upon arousing all his neighbours on account of his own sleeplessness. We may be wrong in suspecting such men of a desire for sympathy,—freely they would sooner be without it—but the knowledge that a fellow-creature is a prey to groundless grief, as we consider it, acts upon our own feelings and in time produces an irritation which, in spite of ourselves, compels us to share his sorrow.

The pessimist is not always, however, a melancholy man. In fact, his humour is often to pose as a cynic, or general critic of the universe, and in that position he feels himself to be on a plane removed from the rest of the world's inhabitants, and the coming sorrows that he foretells have no concern with him. He regards himself as a mere spectator in the theatre of Life, but a spectator with sufficient insight into things theatrical to guess that the pleasant farce now upon the boards is but the prelude to a tragedy. He is in the world, but not of it, and the strange gambols he witnesses merely produce in him a slight pity tempered with amusement. This scornful attitude has come to be considered the fashionable one for men of any education and originality. It is not, to our mind, a cheerful one. We prefer still, no matter how ridiculous it may seem, the simple creeds of our forefathers. We confess even to a certain faith in the future of the British nation. It is much the fashion now to sneer at our ancient belief in the superiority of our own race, and call it insular prejudice ; to ridicule patriotic fervour, and term it blustering conceit. There are some men who object strongly even to the song or ballad that savours of this heresy, and who would school the race

to speak with bated breath of past achievements in war, from a fear, presumably, lest they should inadvertently hurt the feelings of some ancient foe. They are never weary of insisting that it has always been our fault, and the source of all our misfortunes, this proneness to undervalue our opponents. They flood the daily papers with alarms, and are ever pressing for more men, more ships, more fortifications, in the event of unforeseen contingencies. We do not deny that they may be doing a certain amount of good in this. The old careless optimism had its faults, no doubt. It is just as well that we should be prepared for possible combinations against us in the future. It is not worth while to expose ourselves needlessly, or to imagine that a fortunate audacity will always help us out of a crisis. But there was something heroic in the old creed that any Englishman was worth his half-a-dozen foreigners or so when it came to fighting ; and it is in vain to build vessels or enrol troops if we destroy the spirit that used to animate our soldiers and sailors in old time, and that has enriched our annals with deeds of reckless daring by land and sea for centuries.

If it were not for the jealous alarmist, it is possible that the burdens of the world might be lightened considerably. It is these people who keep urging on their respective countries to vie with each other in expensive preparations for war. We wish a plague on all such pestilent fellows. What do we want with new explosives and fresh varieties of implements for destroying life ! There is something ridiculous surely in the present position of affairs in Europe, something ridiculous, and at the same time most mournfully sad. These great nations in a condition of armed suspense, still increasing their preparation for war and still hesitating to begin the battle, remind us of nothing so much as of so many frogs gradually inflating themselves in order

to strike terror into their rivals. And indeed it is likely enough that one or two will burst with the effort before they come to actual business. War has little enough attraction for any reasonable man now. What with submarine ships and torpedoes, with air-balloons and weapons of precision, there is altogether getting to be too much risk about it. Even a hired soldier likes to have a chance, to have fair play given to him, to be able to give stroke for stroke. There is not much excitement in receiving one's death-blow from a battery six miles distant, or in sharing a common fate with some hundreds of comrades through an inglorious charge of dynamite dropped from the clouds at night-time. To say nothing of the unconscionable burden a modern army (even on a peace- footing) lays upon the tax-payer, it is becoming evident, even from the soldier's point of view, that some return to simpler methods is advisable. As to the romance of war, it received a shrewd blow at the introduction of gunpowder, and, what with the maxim-gun and smokeless explosives, it is like to perish altogether before the next European struggle.

With the bombs of anarchists and the groaning of oppressed tax-payers, it is undeniable that there is a fine field for melancholy in our viewing of the world. Little remains for the onlooker but something of a Stoic calm, to be maintained as well as he is able in the face of adverse circumstances. By hard work it is fortunately possible as a rule to be quit of much unnecessary thought, and in diligently employing ourselves on our

own business we may escape the sad conviction of our ultimate ruin. It is hard sometimes to refrain from wishing that the wheels of progress could be stayed, or even set back for some half century or so in their course. Was not the world the happier without a fair percentage of our modern improvements and discoveries? Like timid children reading a tragic story we are afraid to think what the end of the book may bring. To be sure, we have our compensations, facilities in railway travelling, brilliant journalistic and other enterprise, and the penny post. There may be yet lying before us, in the future, fresh triumphs of civilisation, marvellous and as yet unimagined developments of science, by which men shall open communication with the stars of heaven and learn the secrets of the spheres. It is quite possible; and possible also that we shall be perfecting at the same time our various explosive apparatus and arms of precision. So that at the last, in the happy invention of some exceptionally powerful agent, it is likely that some country will contrive to blow itself from off the face of this earth, thereby settling once and for all its own claim to precedence. Such a lesson might prove a salutary check upon the ambition of the rest. But the bare possibility of such an occurrence should suggest to us, as the most reasonable course, the propriety of lagging a trifle behind in the matter of new experiments, or, what were still more to be wished, that we should agree to abandon the further prosecution of such inventions for all time.

BEGGING LETTERS AND THEIR WRITERS.

WE have often been asked in the course of our professional work to define a Begging Letter Writer in precise terms. This is not so easy as might be thought. It is true that they form a class of mendicants distinct from any other, and that they are all persons of blood-sucking propensities and predatory habits. But there our definition must end, for their modes of operation are very various ; they are drawn from every rank in life, and they prey on all classes of society from a shopkeeper to a Prince of the Blood.

It is thought by many that the Begging Letter Writer picks his intended victim from the most guileless of philanthropists. This is a delusion. It is within our personal knowledge, for instance, that more than one of the tribe reaps a good harvest by appealing to some of the most eminent administrators of the law ; though, of course, only passed masters in the art need hope to succeed in such ambitious flights. We once made the acquaintance of a man who did an extensive business in this way. His plan was to send printed slips of poetry, professing to be of his own composition, of little value indeed in his own estimation, as he declared with engaging modesty, but which had been approved by writers of taste and judgment when the lines were written many years ago. Now, he said, he was an old man, ground down with misfortunes and the miseries of extreme poverty, only just able to keep the wolf from the door by addressing envelopes and such like drudgery. Life was very hard, and should the enclosed sonnet merit approbation from his Lordship, a trifle in recognition of the same would honour, as well as comfort, a humble, destitute member of his Lordship's own profession.

This gentleman lived in a dreary quarter of the East End, in a street mostly inhabited by mechanics and labourers of the better class. A dirty slipshod woman came to the door and answered with an abrupt emphatic negative our question as to whether Mr. D. was at home. We told her then from whom we came, and at the sound of one of the best-known names in England she became as obsequious as she had before been surly, and with many apologies ushered us down some filthy stairs into a basement room, nearly dark though the time was but three o'clock in the afternoon. Here she lit a lamp, and left us to inform Mr. D. of the honour awaiting him.

The room was mouldy, malodorous, and bare, yet there was something about it we had never before seen in a room in this neighbourhood. It contained two pieces of furniture : one, a table covered with green baize much bespattered with ink, on which was a writing-case, pens, and paper in good preservation ; the other, an arm-chair very old and worn, but still bearing the outward form of such a chair as might be found in the study of a literary man. On the chimney piece was a meerschaum pipe of good quality and richly coloured ; and lastly, on the wall behind, was a small bookshelf, containing three calf-bound tomes on law more than half a century old, and two yellow-backed French novels of the most extreme type.

The door now opened, and a figure, in keeping with the room, entered with the stealthy tread of a cat, and bowed politely. Mr. D. was a man about seventy years of age, tall and stooping. He wore a dressing-gown which looked as old as himself, and slippers in the last stage of decay. His head was small, round, and quite bald ; his face a mass of tiny wrinkles, with bright,

cunning, shifty eyes. His manners were those of one who in his time had been accustomed to good society.

His first action was to relate without being asked what he called the history of his life. It was a picturesque narrative told with infinite ingenuity. Yet that it was true in the main we have little doubt; Mr. D. was far too clever a man to waste his breath in telling unprofitable lies. He was born, he said, to a good position, his father being a prosperous professional man. He had taken his degree at Cambridge, had read for the bar, and then—fallen. His father died about this time, and the son wasted his share of the money, married a servant, and lost caste altogether. For many years, however, he had been a reformed character and lived by law-writing and copying. Now he was nearly starving.

So far, so good; the case was well put, and no attempt made to excite pity by any obvious exaggerations. But a touchstone had to be applied, to be followed by inquiry and verification. "Have you children?" "Yes." "Any sons?" He frowned: "Yes, but not at home; they have nothing to do with me, sir, nor I with them." "Excuse the question; are they married?" "No." "They are of an age to earn their own living?" "Certainly." "Do they assist you?" "They do not." At this point we looked at one another steadily. Then we asked for the name of one of those sons that we might ascertain why they did not help their father. Mr. D. stared for a moment with an air of great surprise, then, with a sudden change of countenance, moved towards the door. "No, sir!" he said, his voice trembling with righteous anger, "No! I could not tell you that. It is enough. I trouble his Lordship no further; I see your motive as clearly as possible, and I make no terms with you." Here he drew himself up and clenched his hands. "I much regret that I should have confided to you the story of my life. Such confidences are only for

the ears of a friend. And what is your reply to them? Have you any sympathy with a poor old man? Do you offer me a gift, however small, to make the grinding poverty less terrible for a little while? No! You only ask questions about my family affairs and commit unwarrantable intrusion within the sacred precincts of my home. I refuse, I say, to answer any further questions. If the condition of this room, and my poor person, is not enough to convince you of the truth of my story, leave me to starve; leave me to linger, withering slowly, until in the desperation of want I creep to the workhouse door,—and die."

After this there was no more to be said, and with a few words of polite regret we took our leave. From a working man of our acquaintance who lived in the same street, we subsequently learned that the postman groaned daily over the enormous budget of letters he had to carry to Mr. D., that the sons were respectable young men who had been brought up by an aunt, their father having turned them out of doors when children, and that Mr. D. himself bore the unenviable reputation of being the most drunken, disreputable old reprobate in the neighbourhood.

But the writers of begging letters are by no means all reprobates. There was a man of a very different stamp, an immense number of whose letters fell into our hands, and with whose daily life we were intimately acquainted for several months. He was a person who, though very poor, wore scrupulously clean linen, a well-brushed frock-coat, a silk hat, and black kid gloves. He allowed every inquiry to be made, professing that he had nothing to conceal. As it happened in course of time a queer fact or two did come to light, connected with a sum of money received yearly by him for a certain specific purpose to which it was not applied, and which speedily came to an end when the donor knew how matters stood. But, on the whole, it was proved that he had a most respectable

record, and further, that were his appeals to the benevolent to cease to bear fruit and he to be forced to depend upon himself, he might morally recover. It is satisfactory to note that in the end this actually happened. For a long while he was entirely convinced that it was the business of the public to support his family until work which precisely suited his fancy came to hand. But finally, finding that neither the public, nor his own children, took this view of the matter, he managed to procure some regular work, and turned his back, we will trust for ever, upon a mendicant's life. This happened more than six years ago. The latest accounts of him are that, with most of his family about him, he is living an honest life as a hard-working London citizen; and that, though he still bears some grudge to those candid friends who succeeded in spoiling the harvest of his begging letters, he owned to one of them not long ago that it was this action, and this only, which weaned him from a precarious existence of discontented idleness to a healthy life of work and independence.

But, after all, it must be owned that such a man is an exception in the craft. Those whose duty it is to examine these matters are usually faced with the worst side of human nature; whether it be the small fry of the trade, or the accomplished master, every case is marked with the stain of deceit and prevarication.

Take, for example, the following delectable epistle, containing a dirty pawn-ticket. "Dear maam, I hop you will excuse this letter from a poor woman today is Christmas day—my husband as been laid up 10 weeks with Rheumatic Fever—I have not a bit of bread or fireing. I was reading today of the Queen haveing 300 pounds of meat roasted in a lump and I thought if she only new how I was placed she would send us something my husband as got a little work to do now to start at once if he could get is tools out of pledge they will cost 15/9 I have sent one of them so that you can see I am

speaking the truth—my husband can begin work on Friday morning." &c. &c. When a visit was made at the writer's house a few days later there was plenty of food in the place and a big fire. The man was at home, a strong fellow with no signs of rheumatism or any other ailment about him. He refused inquiry with abusive language. Afterwards it was discovered that the aforesaid tools had been redeemed the week before with money procured from some other source, and promptly pledged again within three days. In fact these tools were a valuable article of commerce. Within three months no less than five letters from the man or his wife, all addressed to different people, fell into our hands. In most instances help had been sent to the writer before inquiry into his condition was thought of.

But there are lower depths of mendicancy even than this. A well-known doctor sent in the following letter for inquiry with the comment that he remembered the name of the man mentioned in the appeal, and would gladly send money to his widow. We give the letter verbatim. "In addressing you I trust that I am not presuming too much upon your kindness, but my poor dear Edgar so often spoke of you (he was house-surgeon and resident accoucheur under you at _____ Hospital) that in my utter friendlessness I am impelled to trespass on your generosity and ask your assistance for a poor widow left in destitute circumstances. My dear Edgar, who was in practise at _____ in the county of _____ died suddenly about three months ago and his affairs were found so involved that scarcely anything was left. For my children's sake I must endeavour at once to do something, and as I know a little of dress-making I could with trifling assistance open a small shop in the neighbourhood. Am I wrong in trusting that you will help the widow of one of your old house-surgeons? I have no near relations to whom I can apply, and the prayers

of a grateful woman that God's blessing may rest upon you and yours will be ever offered by, sincerely yours,
C—— E—— C."

This was an appeal to touch a good man's heart. The address given was visited at once; in answer to the visitor's knock a man mending boots at a window invited him to enter. This man shook his head vaguely at first when asked for Mrs. C., then grinned and nodded. "Oh, I know who you mean; it's those parties who has their letters left here. I don't know where they live, but they call twice a week to see if anything has come. It's a man and a woman, husband and wife, I suppose. They says they lives lower down the street at No. 151, and that as this house is 15, letters might come here by mistake, and might they call now and then to see if any did come. They was here yesterday, or he was. Do you know him? A stoutish chap with red hair, well-dressed for this neighbourhood. No, I don't know nothing more about them than that. It was you mentioning the name; that was what he called himself. You go to 151, and likely enough you'll find 'em." The cobbler's advice was taken. At No. 151 we found a milk-shop with a stout, decent-looking woman handling the cans. No, the people did not live there, she said; they had asked if they might have their letters addressed here as they had only just come to London, and were moving about a great deal. Their story, she said, seemed straightforward, and several letters had been received and taken away by Mr. C., as he called himself. It was believed that they lived in some buildings near, but they seemed mysterious people. The buildings were searched in vain, and then a report was sent to the benevolent doctor concerning the "widow" which must have surprised him. A few days later a letter in the same hand, and couched much in the same terms, was received by another doctor from another part of London. In this instance a blunder had been made, for this

doctor happened to be acquainted with "my poor dear Edgar's" real widow and knew her to be in comfortable circumstances, and not to be living in London at all.

Here was a case of direct fraud. We have since been informed that the appeals have been successfully stopped by the police.

Another large class of begging letters come from workhouses and poor-law infirmaries. The writers send eloquent narratives of their past lives, asking for the smallest trifles to alleviate their present woes, and to enable them to start afresh in life. Sometimes they represent themselves to be broken-down clergymen or missionaries; more often they are discharged soldiers, who give startling accounts of their heroism in defence of their country, but, on inquiry, cannot produce their discharges or be traced at the War-Office. When they receive assistance (which, alas! they often do) they disappear from the workhouse to drink up the proceeds of their eloquent pleadings, invariably returning after no long absence to that unfailing asylum and to the work of composing further appeals.

Women are quite as active as men, even when working single-handed. One day there came to us a woman, who was severely and uncompromisingly respectable in appearance. She had been referred for inquiry by a gentleman in the north of England to whom she had written claiming relationship (a claim he entirely repudiated) and begging for money to procure food.

The manner of Mrs. G. was very austere. It passed her comprehension, she said, why she had been sent for to such a place as this. Inquiry, was that it? Well, she was afraid of nothing; she lived a virtuous life. A lady of this description was not easy to deal with, for she sat down to be questioned with the air of a martyr bound to the stake. At the first question the rose with an indignant sweep of her skirts, and announced her

intention of leaving at once. Yet it was a simple question ; where had she lived three months ago before coming to her present address ? but it was too much for Mrs. G., and after relieving her mind by some severe strictures upon the "charity which gave nothing but crushed the poor with impertinent inquiry," she went away.

A few weeks later a letter (from which the following is an extract) was sent by Mrs. G. to a gentleman in the City, and forwarded to us for verification. "I am in arrears with my rent and have no means of paying any, we have not tasted meat for four weeks only bread and tea, and sometimes only prison fare, bread and cold water. I am entirely helpless and alone, not one friend in this great City of wealth and plenty, will you help me or inform me where I can apply for help to save me from starvation, I am weak and ill from want of common food. I live a quiet virtuous life." We called upon the woman early in the afternoon and contrived, for reasons of our own, to enter her room without more notice than a tap at the door. It was a fair-sized apartment, carpeted and furnished with a sofa, four cushioned chairs, a good table, two beds, and a chest of drawers. A large fire was in the grate though it was summer-time, and on the table, neatly laid on a white cloth, were the remains of a mutton chop, baked potatoes, a glass containing the dregs of half-a-pint of stout, tea, bread, and butter.

Mrs. G.'s face, as she saw our eyes wandering over these signs of starvation, was an interesting study ; but she was not in the least abashed. A friend, she said, had just sent in the food, a certain Mrs. Smith ; but the name was not given without some hesitation. Where did Mrs. Smith live ? That was a question which no one on earth should compel her to answer. It was useless to ask her such questions. Those people who refused to help her unless she endured insult might leave her to starve if they pleased. Others there were, thank

God, whose hearts were touched by reading the appeal of a virtuous woman, and who required no other proof of her needs than her word. Upon those truly charitable souls she depended. No one need trouble to call again ; and no one ever has.

The most striking feature in this case, and in others of the same class, was the absence of any shame or confusion in the people when they were found out. No coiner or burglar who has served his time could be less abashed than a Begging Letter Writer, even of comparatively short experience, when caught in some palpable lie.

The saddest instance of this came under our notice three years ago. A tradesman of good position in a provincial town became bankrupt through speculation and extravagance, and soon afterwards began to suffer from illness which temporarily incapacitated him from work. His children were all grown up ; one son, though married, stood by his father nobly, but the rest were rather an encumbrance to him than otherwise, and the family after tiring out their friends in their native town, drifted to London. When they came they were already ankle deep in the mire of mendicancy. There seemed hope, however, of saving them. A full statement of their difficulties and resources was obtained from Mrs. T. with the help of a lady as gentle as she was firm ; but alas ! when it came to the choice of a way to help, all our hopes tumbled about our ears like a pack of cards. There were children young and strong, moreover Mrs. T. was not delicate though elderly ; and so our kind counsellor (herself afraid of no work that had to be done) suggested that as the head of the house was unable now to keep them all, they should turn to and keep him. This suggestion was met with expressions of extreme disfavour, and finally rejected with a cutting rejoinder that one who had been brought up "a lady" would certainly not consent at her time of life to do menial work.

A gift, even of trifling value, would have been acceptable, and received in a proper spirit; but such treatment as this was not to be endured.

There was no reasoning with the woman, and the T.'s went their own way. Letter after letter came into our hands, giving piteous accounts of their woes from Mr. T.'s afflictions, carefully suppressing the fact that the married son paid the rent and that two grown-up daughters were now at work. One day a new departure was made, calling for special inquiry. "We do not ask for ourselves," the letter ran, "but for a dear son going into consumption, who needs nourishment we cannot give him. We would not write at all, but for the sake of our dear boy." Now, there was one man who had believed in the T.'s and had helped them from time to time. To him we went forthwith, and seldom have we seen any one so indignant as he was when he read this letter. "That son!" he gasped. "Why the young scamp is in regular work at thirty shillings a week, with two meals a day thrown in. He told me so himself last Sunday." This was serious news, and the next step was to call upon the T.'s. We were received with melancholy dignity by Mrs. T., who was dressed as a "lady" should be in a black gown uncommonly like silk, a cap embroidered with white lace, and a light woollen wrapper thrown over her shoulders. The good matron was sitting, with her hands before her, in front of a blazing fire in a room furnished with relics of past grandeur. We drew her attention to the letter, and asked for the son. She sighed deeply, and said he had gone for a walk, also that he had earned nothing for many weeks and had not made eighteen shillings in a week for some months. We watched Mrs. T. closely all the time, impressing her with the necessity for perfect accuracy of statement. She answered nothing except to make a distant bow, as though it were a liberty to appear to doubt her least

word. This was the last time we troubled ourselves with Mrs. T. Frightened at length by the thought of possible consequences, she confessed to a friend that she had said what was not true, and a few months later, "the dear son" married, and has now, we believe, a family of his own.

Such is the moral effect of writing begging letters upon people who but a year before would have rejected with scorn the notion that they could, in any circumstances, sink so low. If twelve months will do so much as this, what must the effect be of thirty years? Not long ago certain letters came into our hands so well written, so cleverly put together, and so original, that we hastened at once to pay a personal visit to the writer. We will call him Mr. B.

A paragraph of one of these letters ran as follows: "A really sufficient change of air at the sea or otherwise (involving the company of my attendant as well as that of Mrs. B.) would cost no less than £30 to £40. If Mr.— [a gentleman to whom appeal had been made] viewed the case with enough favour *prima facie* to say that he would try to raise that sum, or anything like it, for that purpose, amongst his friends subject to my laying before you formal particulars of my needs and circumstances, I may say that I feel the object is so all important that I would do that." It will be long before we forget our visit to this man. In a compact eight-roomed house, in a parlour bedroom furnished with a suite of good mahogany, with shelves on the walls filled with well-bound books and a table at the bedside loaded with oranges, grapes, and cigars, on a bed covered with a soft quilt and sheets of the finest texture, lay the writer of this and countless other appeals. An aristocrat of the profession evidently! He was an old man with snowy hair, broad shoulders, and the reddest face conceivable; a very clever face, with fiery eyes, a hooked nose, and a coarse, hard

mouth. He wore a black velvet smoking-cap and a handsome shawl of Scotch plaid was thrown round him, for he sat up in bed in honour of our visit. Indeed, look where we might, there was no sign of poverty visible anywhere.

His polite and stately condescension was so embarrassing that for some time we were glad to let him talk on and gather our scattered wits together. "Allow me to thank you, my dear sir, for your kind visit," he began. "Are you surprised to find me decently clothed and fed? No doubt you are; and a little indignant perhaps. I don't blame you; it is a very natural feeling. Working as you do among the lower orders it must be quite a shock to be confronted with one of your own class reduced by circumstances to appeal to the charitable public."

He then proceeded, with admirable ingenuity and clearness, to explain that he had suffered from serious physical defects all his life; that of late years his health had altered much for the worse, and though he still held a situation of which he made an income sufficient to procure the bare necessities of life, he was obliged to throw himself upon the charity of the benevolent for "the luxuries, or I may say, necessary comforts which my health and unfortunate position require." This good man had seen fit to marry in spite of his "affliction," and had a son and daughter. By careful questions I learnt that the son, a clerk at £150 a year, had left home suddenly, and married against his father's wish, while the wife and daughter, two gaunt, half-starved, overworked creatures, still remained at home.

We talked together a long time, and by degrees the story of this man's life became plain, and was confirmed by subsequent inquiry. He was a man of capacity and education, and able when he chose to be a valuable servant to the firm who still employed him. But he was without

principle or feeling. The ill-health he suffered from was dyspepsia, contracted by systematic over-eating and drinking. He thought of no one but himself, and cared for nothing but his own comfort. He had an income amply sufficient for his wants, but through making the discovery that well-worded begging letters could be relied upon to bring in some return, he became shamefully extravagant, and latterly had been falling into debt and difficulties. The most repulsive feature of the case was his treatment of his wife and daughter. They had coarse food, while he lived on all the dainties of the season; their rooms were as poor as those of the commonest servant, while his were as comfortable as they could be made. As to the son, he was now his father's bitterest enemy.

From such a case as this it is instructive to turn to that of a widow who was saved by the prompt action of two ladies from the degradation which, as we have shown, the writing of begging letters brings upon its followers. This woman was well educated and refined. She is now earning an independent livelihood, and is beyond all fear of mendicancy. Yet once, being in serious trouble, she sent off a letter to a stranger, and it is believed by her friends that had response been made in money to this appeal, which was quite genuine, she would have been ruined for life. Afterwards, the friends who saved her asked what had put it into her head to do such a thing. Her reply was a significant one. She had seen a curate writing appeals broadcast for a church, and, in the desperation of the crisis of her affairs, feeling, she said, that she needed the aid infinitely more than he did, she followed his example and wrote for herself.

This story carries a forcible moral with it, which may be applied to many descriptions of charitable appeal. The ease with which perfectly conscientious and well-meaning persons can slide into exaggerated statements, and

even into absolute falsehood, when they once begin to ask for help, however good the object may be, from people not acquainted with the facts of the case, shows how demoralising the effect must be upon those who are writing for themselves.

There is in truth far too much begging going on among "charitable" people. The following instance, with which we will close our article, occurred in the working of a society renowned for its opposition to mendicancy in every shape and form.

A young girl had been apprenticed to a business, and for two years required maintenance and careful supervision. There were two ladies actively interested in this good work. One was visiting the girl, the other arranging the financial part of the business. It so happened, however, that the visitor was asked at a moment's notice to write to a gentleman for assistance who had expressed his willingness to help any case of this kind. A report was sent, very brief and to the point, for the visitor was not versed in the arts of "charitable appeal." A reply came by return of post with a cheque for the sum required. But the donor

said he was confused between the letter he now answered and another he had just received from the other lady. This lady was a mistress of the art ; it was said that for any deserving object she could obtain £40 within three days, so potent was her pen. Yet she was as honourable a woman in the ordinary dealings of life as you could meet with. Such, however, is the fatal influence which begging exerts upon its votaries that in explaining the case of this girl, who had a worthless father, she asked for help on the ground that it would assist "a poor orphan to establish herself in the world." No wonder the man appealed to was puzzled, for the lady who first wrote to him had distinctly mentioned the existence of this parent. When the lady of too lively an imagination was taxed with her inaccuracy she coolly replied : "It was unlucky that he should hear two different accounts. You ought to have asked me what you were to say. The word orphan, I think, always has a good effect, and as this father of hers cannot perform a father's part, why, really, we may call her an orphan, after all!"

THE CLIFF-CLIMBERS.

CREGBY is curiously placed high up on a plateau overlooking the sea. All round the village there is rich farming land, but this ends suddenly to the eastward in a great pale wall of limestone overhanging the sea for several miles with never a break, and forming between the plane of the land above and the plane of the water below a curious vertical world, some hundreds of feet in depth, which belongs to neither. Hither in the breeding season come myriads of seabirds,—guillemots, razor-bills, puffins, and kittiwakes—in obedience to an instinct which is older than all human history; and here on the bare ledges of the cliffs they lay their great eggs and seek to rear their unshapely chicks. For these eggs there is always a ready sale, and it has been the custom of the villagers for many generations to gather, in due season, this harvest of the rocks during six weeks of every year, in June and the early part of July, earning thereby a greater profit than their ordinary field-labour would give them. This harvest is regulated by ancient custom, and by some curious unwritten law of Cregby certain families have the monopoly of it.

One of the most ancient stems of this climbing aristocracy was the family of the Cowlheads. So far back as the parish registers reached, or the gravestones in the little churchyard were decipherable, there had always been Cowlheads in Cregby; and no one has ever heard of a time when the right to climb the very best part of the cliff has not belonged to them.

Yet in the course of ages it happened to the Cowlheads, as to many another ancient family, that the stock grew feeble, and it had come to pass

that although there was still nominally a Cowlhead gang, its leader bore another name. At the time referred to there was but one Cowlhead who climbed, and he, Simon, was a raw youth, clever enough with the ropes as every one owned, but for the rest entirely lacking experience and common sense. So young a man would not have been accepted by the other climbers had it not happened that he was the only one of the family available. His father, Dick Cowlhead, a dull, heavy man wanting in enterprise, had gone to the cliff for several years, but had made no headway, and willingly sank under the guidance of an energetic newcomer without any hereditary claims, a newcomer who was at first only a stop-gap, taken on when another of the old families “ran to women-folk,” and could supply no climber. And while yet in his prime the rheumatism (no doubt, had he been a richer man, the doctors would have called it gout,) had stiffened Dick’s limbs so that he could no longer work the rope; after which there was nothing for it but to leave climbing and confine himself to such field-work as he could do. But that the family might not altogether lose its much-needed share of the egg-money, it was agreed that his eldest son Simon, a lad of sixteen, should be admitted into the gang.

This lad was by no means a favourite in the village. It was his unhappy fate to have been born with an ancestral taint in the form of an uncontrollable predilection towards wagery, while for the rest he was unfortunately like his father, exceedingly dull and stupid, a heavy-faced, tow-headed country lout of the most pronounced type. Now a joker with wit is often more or less of a nuisance,

but a joker *without* that quality is always an absolute infliction, especially in a country place. And as the playfulness of a young bullock was grace itself compared with that of young Simon Cowlthead, it is not at all surprising that the inhabitants of Cregby came cordially to detest this ungainly youth, and to visit their displeasure at his mischievous pranks upon various parts of his youthful anatomy. It may be readily imagined that this youth was from the first a constant source of anxiety and annoyance to the shrewd and energetic John Bower, the man who had worked his way to the head of the gang.

The methods of the climbers are so simple and secure that accidents are of rare occurrence. Such as do happen are chiefly small injuries from falling stones dislodged by the friction of the rope as the climber swings himself below. Of the three men who form a gang one descends to do the actual work of gathering the eggs, while the other two remain above at the more arduous, if less dangerous, task of lowering and hoisting their comrade. At the spot selected for a descent a stake is driven into the earth near the edge of the cliff, and to this stake a stout cord is fixed. This is the hand-line, which serves for signalling and to relieve the strain on the main cord. Then the man who is to descend adjusts about him a double loop of rope, or short breeches of canvas, at the end of the much stouter climbing-rope, and sometimes may further secure himself by a strap passed loosely round the hips. All being ready, the climber taking up the hand-line walks down the short slope which caps the precipice, passes over the verge, and is lost to view, while his two comrades, seated above, with feet well planted in little pits cut out of the turf, brace themselves to their labour, making of their thighs and bodies a living brake. And thus they hoist or lower the climber, according to the nature of the signal which he gives. If he be skilful the man below will greatly

lighten their labour, by supporting the greater part of his weight on the hand-line at the instant that their effort on the main rope is felt. To work thus in rhythmical unison with the men above, to watch and avoid those terrible missiles, the falling stones, to prevent the twisting of the ropes, and, by keeping the feet in touch with the cliff (for which purpose the legs must be held almost horizontally), to avoid bruising the body and smashing the eggs against the face of the rock,—these are things which mark the expert in cliff-climbing.

Now it is not given to every one, not even though he be born in the village of Cregby, to swing at ease, a living pendulum, at the end of two or three hundred feet of rope with a great precipice still below you, and the blue sea, so strange and dizzy to look upon from this point of view, beneath and around you. Hence when after the two first seasons young Simon, upon trial below, proved, to the surprise of his companions, as capable there as he had been lazy and incompetent at the top, John Bower wisely made the most of the lad's faculty. "He's good for nothing at aught else, so we'd better keep him below," he remarked to his mate.

This arrangement was entirely to the lad's satisfaction. He revelled in the work, for the excitement of it stirred fresh life in his clumsy frame. To any one who had beheld his sluggishness on land, the grace and dexterity with which like some wild ape he bounded from ledge to ledge in that strange middle-world would have seemed incomprehensible. John Bower's explanation was that "climmin' was bred in the bone."

Even when the season was over and the ropes carefully coiled and housed till another year, Simon could not be kept from the cliffs. He would slink away from his proper work on every opportunity, in spite of his mother's tongue and his father's hand, to enjoy the dangerous pleasure of scrambling along the face of the

precipice wherever he could find hand-grip and foot-hold.

But in the fifth year of his climbing, when the youth had already begun to think himself a man, a terrible occurrence prematurely ended his career in the cliffs.

The Cowlhead gang had worked nearly the whole of that fine June day with excellent results. Towards evening John Bower said, "We'll just try 'Fowerscore,' and then go home." It may here be observed that we have taken such liberties with the speech of John Bower and his mates as may render it intelligible to those who know not the tongue of Cregby.

"Nay," said Simon, out of temper at a recent rough reproof of John's for his careless handling of some eggs, "I've done enough for to-day. Leave Fowerscore till to-morrow."

But John Bower was masterful, as became the chief of a gang. "If thou won't climb Fowerscore, I'll climb it myself," said he. And he led the way to the place.

Now this Fourscore was one of the most difficult spots in the cliff because of the great overhang which the upper part of the precipice had at this point. For this reason the attempts of the climbers to reach its ledges had, until a short time before, always failed. Here the birds finding themselves undisturbed, clustered thickest, until every square inch of rock flat enough to support an egg had its occupant, and the possessors of places had to do continual battle with their envious and less fortunate sisters for their right to remain. But three or four winters previously the frost had dislodged a great slice of rock from the brow, and in the following season John Bower, taking advantage of this fall, had descended, and by a long in-swing had gained footing on the ledges, where a rich harvest awaited him. Into the bags slung on either side of him he counted eighty eggs, and with this as a sufficient load, considering the nature of the ascent, he returned to the top, and twice again

descended for fourscore more. After that the climbers regularly visited their freshly conquered territory, and whoever descended would have counted it shame to return without a full burden; wherefore as Fourscore the place was known.

When they reached the spot, Simon stood sulkily aside while John and his mate made their preparations. Soon all was ready, and the elder had begun to adjust the rope upon himself when the young man with a bad grace grew jealous and yielded. John handed it over to him at once, and the lad took up the hand-line also and steadied himself down the short upper slope.

"Mind to kick all loose stones down as thou goes, lad, and see that the rope don't rub on them sharp edges below thee, and mind the lines don't swing out o' thy reach when thou lands," was John's admonishment as the young man disappeared over the verge. Then the men at the top braced themselves to the strain, John sitting first with heels well set.

For a short time the rope was paid away in little jerks showing that Stephen had still some hold of the cliff with his feet. "Steady now!" cried John, who had been carefully noting its course. "He'll swing clear in another minute," and as he spoke the rope suddenly became taut. "Let him have it as he swings," he exclaimed; and then at each sway they let out the slack more and more rapidly that the climber might pass the deep bight before the cords began to twist. "Now he's touchin' again!" said John. "Now he's landed! That's all right!" The rope hung slack now, and they knew that Simon had reached the broad ledges and made fast his lines, while he moved independently and comfortably along, gathering his spoil two hundred feet below. But a longer pause than usual followed. "He's restin' a bit," was John's interpretation. Then the cords showed motion again, and immediately a sharp shake of the hand-line gave

the signal for hoisting, and the two men began to tug with all their might upon the main rope. It was not light work to raise the weight of a man, with the added weight of a cable, vertically from such depths, and the two men breathed hard as they pulled. They had recovered only a few feet when John was aware of something wrong below. "He lifts unaccountable dead an' heavy," he panted. "He can't be—," with a jerk he had tumbled back on the grass, the other man lay sprawling behind, and the rope made a great leap and then shook light and loosely at the cliff edge.

"My God," said John hoarsely. "It's broken!" In a second he was on his feet and the slack was spinning up through his hands as if it were under the drum of some swift machine. Speedily the end of the rope all frayed and torn came up the slope. "Surely he's stuck to the hand-line!" cried the man in despair, and he seized that cord. But there was no resistance upon it, and in a moment it also lay in a useless coil at his feet.

"Run out to yon nab, Jacob, for heaven's sake, and see if you can't see the poor lad!" And he himself, all shaking, ran out upon a narrow spur in the opposite direction. He crept down the upper slope, and hung most perilously over the very verge with only a handful of grass holding him back from destruction. "Oh, Jacob! can you see aught?"

"Oh, John, nought at all!" came back the woeful answer from the other spur.

"Lord help us, neither can I! Back, man, quick! I must go down!" and he crept up the slope again and ran to the ropes.

"But can I hold—" began his companion.

"Never mind buts!" cried John as he bent a loop on the broken end. "It's no time for buts; manage as best thou can!" With that he slipped his thigh into the noose and with the hand-line in his grasp went over the

edge, while the other man held on for the life of both of them. Once and again he swayed as though the running rope must drag him headlong down, but almost instantly the pressure was relieved, and he knew that John had reached the ledges. Anxiously he waited, and by and by the signal for hoisting came and he bent every nerve and muscle to his task. But there was no double load on the rope. Slowly and slowly the slack gathered until at length John's grave weather-beaten face appeared above the edge. "There's nought to be seen down there," he said, "nought at all. You be off as sharp as ever you can to South Bay and get 'em to bring a boat; quick! tide's coming up fast! And I must go and tell his poor mother and father."

So they hurried away each on his sad errand, while the young man whose mangled corpse they believed lay under the plashing waters below, crouched safely in a deep crevice half-way down the steep, and chuckled with the delight of a born humorist at the magnificent success of his little joke. It had so nearly been a failure too, for after he had carefully hammered out the substance of the rope across a sharp rock, leaving just one strand unbroken which he was sure would give way with the slightest strain and so complete the illusion, he had given the signal to the men above, and found too late that he had miscalculated the strength of that good hemp fibre. He felt himself being slowly dragged from the ledge, and had just time to grasp the hand-line at the instant that he was launched away into the air; and when, a moment later, the strand yielded, it was only his hold upon that slender line which saved him from making in stern reality that dreadful plunge of two hundred feet from crag to crag into the sea below. However, for one with Simon's training it was not a very difficult matter to swing himself in again, and he landed on the ledge with a rebound. But the scare took hold of him, and

when he had crept into his dark crevice he was glad enough to find himself out of sight for a while of the terrible wall and the pale sea.

Not until he had enjoyed the spectacle of John Bower's pale and awe-struck face, which he saw distinctly as it swung in mid-air before the mouth of his crevice, did he quite recover his spirits. He found it then really hard work to stifle his mirth, until it struck him what a terrible business there would be if John should discover him, and that kept him very still until the danger was past. After that he gave himself up to a complete enjoyment of the situation. This splendid plot had occurred to him quite suddenly as he had descended. It was really a most excellent way of getting even with them for sending him, and he would have the laugh of them all. He had discovered that, though Fourscore was such an awkward place to get into from above, when once landed you could travel with ease for quite a long distance along the ledges, and that in one direction rising steadily step by step, you might even reach a little notch up which it was comparatively easy to scramble to the top of the cliff. He had kept this piece of information to himself, pleased to think how in some respects, at any rate, he was ever so much wiser than the generality of folk; and now he meant to make use of it. When he had given John and the rest of them fright enough, he would scramble up and saunter off home as though nothing had happened. And he would not tell them how he had managed it either.

Such was Simon's pretty scheme, but somehow things did not turn out quite as he expected. In the first place, that sideway climb along the ledges, now that he was compelled to make it, was by no means so simple as he had reckoned upon. When he crept out everything seemed so lonely and still, in spite of the noise of the birds and the wash of the sea below, that it troubled him, and he

started violently at such simple and usual things as the whirring of a scout's wings close above his head. Then he discovered that the very ledges, along which ordinarily he would have passed as easily as upon a roadside pathway, were bristling now with difficulties, and when he thought of the far more dangerous places ahead of him he actually shuddered. Clearly until he felt steadier it was no use attempting to tackle them. So finding another cranny wherein he could stretch his length he lay himself down fairly tired, and fell fast asleep.

He did not know how long he had slept when he was awakened from unquiet dreams by the dip of oars and faint sounds rising tremulously from the sea. He heard a sobbing voice and knew that it was his mother's. "My poor bairn! My poor bairn!" it constantly repeated, and then there came the deep broken tones of his father trying to comfort her. "Is this the spot?" asked a strange voice. "Ay! this is where it happened, just to the left of yon green patch," replied another, which he recognised as John Bower's; and then his mother's pitiful refrain broke in again, "My poor bairn!" It turned Simon cold to hear it.

From his cranny he could not see the boat, but evidently it came as close in as the swell on the rocks would permit. Every sound from it swam up to him, thin, yet very distinct. "Poor lad!" he heard the boatman say. "The sea's gettin' what was left of him; it would carry him south'ard wi' this tide. I fear no mair'll be seen on him." And then the sobs and the wail of his mother rose up again, and this time no one tried to soothe her. Simon lay dazed and shivering, not quite realising it all, and before he was fairly conscious of his position the sounds had grown fainter and fainter, and the boat had moved slowly off to southward.

Then it began to dawn upon him that perhaps this wasn't going to be such a splendid joke after all. He

sat up and began to ponder in his slow way how it was going to end, and somehow became very uncomfortable. It was very lonesome there. The sea-birds on the ledges all round him cluttered and laughed and barked after their own peculiar fashion, and it struck him that they knew his plight and were mocking him. The woe of his mother still rang in his tingling ears. How could he go home and tell them that he had fooled them? Never, never now dare he do that! But what should he tell them then? Ay, that was going to be a very knotty point! The thought of having to face John Bower's cross-examination with anything less than the truth was positively terrible; he dursn't risk it! Yet to tell the truth was impossible. The more he pondered over it the greater became his perplexity, until he burst into a sweat of remorse and shame. And by and by the birds ceased their cries, all except a single one here and there whose chuckle came strangely to the ear like a nightmare, and the long twilight faded gently, and faint stars twinkled in and out over the sea, and yet his puzzle was not solved. The night brought a feeling akin to relief to him; since now at any rate he must have a few hours respite, for it would be sheer madness to attempt to scale that cliff in the dark. In silent dejection the lad shrank back within his shelter to wait for the morning. The pale flush in the western sky crept round to the north, where he could see it over the sea; and then very slowly moved eastward, gradually gathering strength as it came, until at length under his weary eyes the rocks below lost their blackness and began to look cold and gray in the moist light of dawn, and the crags above him, which all night had pushed out mocking faces whenever he had ventured to look up at them, drew themselves together, stern and decorous, ignoring their midnight antics. Then the guillemots and razorbills began to wing their laboured flight

straight out to sea, and their yelping and chuckling began again. A broad-winged gull passed slowly by, as if but half awake, and then a silent thievish jackdaw.

Simon arose now and stretched his cramped limbs. He was aware of keen hunger and bethought himself of the egg-satchels still hanging across his shoulders. He had placed a few eggs in them almost mechanically in passing along the ledges, and a couple of these he broke and swallowed and felt his courage revive. The bags he flung away from him, and they fluttered out and fell into the sea.

Then he crept forward, setting his fingers hard in the crevices, and rose thus steadily ledge by ledge, till the last perilous step was achieved and he reached the dewy slope at the summit. Once in safety his heart gave way, he flung himself face downward into the dank herbage and burst out in a paroxysm of grief. "What shall I do?" moaned this wretched humorist. "What ever shall I do? I never dare go home again! I daren't, I daren't!"

Thus he lay while the daylight brightened, and presently across the rippling water glinted the dull bronze disk of the sun. Then he knew that the village would soon be astir, and that he must remain there no longer if he would avoid discovery. So he rose and shrank off inland under cover of the hedgerows, fetching long circuits to shun the farmsteads; and before the teams were fairly at work on the land he had put several miles between himself and his folk, and still plodded aimlessly forward along the green byways.

II.

FOR a time the agitation in Cregby over the loss of Simon Cowlhead was great. Souls came into being and souls departed there, as elsewhere, often enough; but generally they came and went so quietly that the joy or trouble of it scarcely spread from

one end of the village to the other. But this was an affair of a very different order. The event was actually chronicled in the great county paper in a paragraph all by itself, with a great head-line thus,—**TERRIBLE DEATH OF A CLIFF-CLIMBER AT CREGBY**—a thing well calculated to make the Cregby people proud of themselves, for even their greatest stack fire, years ago, when three of Farmer Runch's horses were burned besides several pigs, had been brought before the world only in a scrap a few lines long packed away in a column of local items. Therefore they passed the paper from hand to hand, and studied and criticised every line of the paragraph, greatly gratified to find themselves all at once so famous. And every night in the little kitchen of *The Grey Horse*, though John Bower drank his beer in gloomy silence, the other man gave to the assembled company every incident of that eventful afternoon, and repeated it for the benefit of every new-comer. It seemed as though the village had at last got a topic of conversation other than the state of stock and crops. Then it was whispered among the women that Simon's ghost had been seen near the place where he was lost. The men heard of it from their wives, and said nothing, but avoided after night-fall the fields which lay above Fourscore.

But this could not last for ever. In time the matter grew stale, and even among his immediate kin, where there was real grief for Simon, the cares which each day brought gradually settled down upon his memory and dimmed it. For a week or two the poor mother sat down to have "a real good cry" whenever she could find time, but with her family of six to look to, and turnip-hoeing, and then harvest coming on so quickly, it was but little chance she had, poor soul, until after she got to bed at nights; and even then she had to cry very quietly for fear of waking her goodman, who needed all his rest badly enough after his day's work.

He, too, used at first, as he bent to his hoe, often to have to sniff and pause, and under pretence of straightening his cramped limbs draw the palm of his rough hand across his face. And there was a servant-lass at a neighbouring farmstead whose tears sometimes fell into her milk-pail as she leaned her head against the ribs of the unconcerned and careless kine.

But as soon as the news and the grief had lost their freshness, there was, so far as Cregby was concerned, an end to the matter; and except when the story of the great accident was revived to impress some chance visitor with the importance of the place, Simon was forgotten. A better man filled his post, though not a better climber; and every season the birds came to the cliffs to lay their eggs, and the men went down to gather them just as before. For the first few years the Cowlhead gang avoided Fourscore, but after a time even this feeling died out, and they climbed it again in its order as a matter of course. Three and twenty years passed thus. The accident had become almost a legend, but John Bower (Old John every one called him now) was still head-man of the Cowlhead gang. After a long lapse the gang once more rejoiced in the presence of one of the traditional name, for young Stephen Cowlhead, who was born the year after his brother Simon was lost, had come to the cliffs. The men noticed that their luck improved from the day of his coming, and firmly believed that it was the power of the old name. Probably a truer reason might have been found under Old John's oft-repeated declaration that "a better climber than Stephen had never climbed, always barring his poor brother Simon." By this time Cowlhead the father had been gathered to his fathers, and the mother, old and feeble, had found shelter with one of her married daughters and nursed the swarming bairns of another generation. Thus things stood in Cregby when it happened upon a certain day

that the Cowlhead gang had once more fixed their ropes to climb Fourscore.

"Now, watch the rope well across that sharp edge just above the big crack," said John, as Stephen stood ready to descend,—a fine strong, good-natured lad, who was better liked by the villagers than poor Simon had ever been. John had repeated this warning so often at this place that it had lost all meaning to the others; but the old man had never forgotten the shock of that terrible day so many years ago. It was this which made him doubly sensitive at Fourscore to every tremor of the line. "What a stroke the lad has, to be sure!" he muttered now as the rope ran rapidly through his hands. "Give him a bit of straight cliff an' he'll all but flee! Now for the slack spot,—steady there, Jacob! There, that's all right! He's on the big shelf now, an' he's cast off to walk to the other end."

While the rope hung idle the two men lit their pipes; but they had scarcely tasted the tobacco before the hand-line struck sharply. "Hup!" cried John casting away his pipe and beginning to haul steadily. After a moment's work he took alarm. "Summut's amiss," he said; "he's in such a hurry; I dreads summut's frightened him. What ever makes him hang so strange and lumpy? Hup, Jacob! Hup quick!"

Faster and faster they swayed to the rope. Speedily a hat, and with the next stroke a head and shoulders rose above the edge. "What the devil!"—exclaimed John, and then words failed him and he stood stock still, though yet holding tight upon the cable. For it was a brown and bearded face that grinned at him, a face altogether strange to him. Without a sound this apparition drew itself forward by the hand-line unaided, and came nimbly up the slope. It stood before them on the sod in the shape of a stalwart middle-aged man, clothed in dark attire of excellent quality, albeit of rather outlandish cut, with a broad gold ring on the little finger

and a heavy gold chain depending from the watch-pocket; altogether a figure in striking contrast with the coarse workday aspect of the cliff-climbers. The apparition gazed down with sardonic enjoyment upon the helpless amazement of the terrified men. But a moment later John Bower had recovered his wits, sprung upon the stranger and fettered him securely with two or three sudden coils of the loose rope.

Then grasping the still grinning figure firmly by the arms the old man forced it backward to the very edge of the descent. "Whether thou's the devil, or whoever thou is," he shouted fiercely, "if thou's done aught amiss to that lad down there, over thou goes. Speak out, afore I counts ten, or I chuck thee down! One,—two,—three,—four—"

Whereupon the stranger ceased to grin, and spoke. "It's all right, John Bower," he said. "I'm Simon Cowlhead come up again."

But old John was not satisfied and did not relax his grip. "Play neither devil nor ghost wi' me!" he said sternly. "Is the lad safe? If not—" and he almost shook the startled joker from his perilous foothold.

"Let me go, John! The lad's all right enough. I only borrowed his ropes. Hark! He's shouting now to know what's become of 'em." The truth of this statement was borne out by the sound of a faint hallo from below.

"Come here, Jacob, and hold this chap fast while I get's the lad up," was old John's mandate as he handed over his prisoner to his companion. "We'll larn more about this after that." The trembling Jacob most unwillingly obeyed, only half reassured even when he felt warm substantial flesh in his grasp, instead of anything clammy or ghost-like. John deftly sent down the rope and set it swinging, and in a moment he felt that it had been grasped by a familiar hand below. His countenance upon this denoted his feeling of immense

relief ; but nevertheless it was not without some anxiety that he watched the edge of the cliff, as a fisherman might watch the water who has just landed one uncanny monster and is afraid that he may have hooked another. But it was "Stephen lad" who came up, and no other ; and then the old man turned to their captive and said, "Now let's hear what you have to say, and mind an' tell us no lies."

Thus admonished, the uncomfortable apparition began his history, stammering very much over the earlier parts of it, John Bower watching him meanwhile with severe and contemptuous eye, and the other two with open-mouthed astonishment. He glossed as best he could over the story of the broken rope, pretending that the breakage was really accidental, and that afterwards while waiting he unintentionally fell asleep. No one made any comment upon this, but the speaker read from old John's face that one at least of his listeners refused to accept this lame tale and guessed the truth. Then he told truly enough how, after his night in the cliffs, he had found himself too much ashamed to show his face at home, and had made off to a large seaport, where he got work as a carter, but couldn't settle there at all, yet still was more afraid of coming home than ever, and therefore, as soon as he had scraped enough money together to pay his passage, he took ship for Australia. There he went to farm-work again and liked it ; and by and by he got to farm a bit of land of his own, and worked it for a good many years ; till a railway came, and a town sprang up all round him, and folks kept worriting and worriting him to sell out. But for a long time he wouldn't ; till at last some one went and offered him such a lot

for his land that he felt bound to part, and did. But after that he felt unsettled again, and didn't exactly know what to put his money into out there, so he thought he'd come and have a look round and see how things were getting on in the old country,—so here he was, and glad to see 'em.

"But how came you to be down Fowerscore ?" demanded John, at the end of this recital.

"Well, you see," explained the wanderer awkwardly, "I felt rather shy even yet about coming back to Cregby, so I've been stopping for a few days at Braston yonder, where an odd stranger more or less isn't noticed ; and I walked up here this morning to have a look at all the old spots, and then I tried that way up I knew of ; and for a wonder it's as easy to get down there as to get up ; and I climbed about and enjoyed myself till I got right on to them big ledges again, and then I saw your ropes come down, and thought, by Jingo ! what a joke it would be to give 'em a bit of a surprise ! So when the lad there let go and went after eggs, I just came out of a hole, and got hold of 'em, and here I am."

"Ay, there thou is, Simon !" echoed John Bower with contemptuous irony. "There thou is ! I thought it was the divil we'd brought up ; but it was summat warse,—it was a d——d fool ! Folks allus says 'fools for luck' ; and that's how it's been wi' thee, Simon. However, we'll climb no mair to-day, lads. This fool's got money, an' he'll have to stand us all drinks an' summat mair besides at *Grey Hoss* yonder for the trouble he's gi'en us. Fools for luck !" So off they went ; and once more for a time there was something interesting to talk about in Cregby.

THE LAST FIGHT OF JOAN OF ARC.

"THE Maiden, beyond the nature of woman, endured to do mighty deeds, and travailed sore to save her company from loss, remaining in the rear as she that was captain, and the most valiant of her troop; there where fortune granted it, for the end of her glory, and for that the latest time of her bearing arms." This gallant testimony to the valour of Joan of Arc on the fatal day beneath the ramparts of Compiègne (May 23rd, 1430) is from the pen of the contemporary George Chastellain, a Burgundian and hostile writer. It may be taken as the text of some remarks on the last fight of the Maiden, and on her character and conduct.

Joan has just been declared "venerable" by the Church, a singular compliment to a girl of nineteen, but the first of the three steps towards canonization. The Venerable Joan may become the Blessed Joan, and finally Saint Joan of Arc. But, by a curious accident, one of her most devoted admirers, Monsieur Paul Marin, captain of artillery in the French service, has recently published some reflections on Joan's last fight, which may be serviceable to the *advocatus diaboli*. If that unpopular personage is to pick a hole in the saintliness of the Maiden, it is in Captain Marin's works that he will find his inspiration. The captain would be the last of men to slur the purest of memories, nor does he regard himself as having done so; he writes in the interests of historical truth. Nevertheless the *advocatus diaboli* will take a different view of the matter in hand, which amounts to this question: did Joan, on one occasion at least, proclaim that by direct promise of St. Catherine she was commissioned to do a feat in which she failed; and did she later, at her

trial by the Inquisition, equivocate on this point?¹

In his first volume Captain Marin tells us how he was impressed in his youth by a remark of the Duc d'Alençon. "The fair Duke," for whom, says his retainer Perceval de Cagny, Joan would do more than for any other man, had been the Maid's companion in arms from the taking of Jargeau to the failure at Paris, from May to September 1429. They were then separated by Charles the Seventh and his favourite La Trémouille. In 1456 the Duke deposed on oath that Joan had a knowledge of war, of the handling of troops, and of artillery, equal to that of a captain of thirty years' standing. This opinion struck M. Marin with surprise, and in maturer life he began to study the Maid as a strategist and tactician. The popular idea of Joan, (as in Lord Stanhope's essay,) regards her as simply a brave girl, crying *Forward!* and herself going foremost. But history acknowledges the military value of her plans, and these Captain Marin set about examining in the case of her last campaign on the Oise. His books, however, really treat less of Joan's tactics than of her character, and are of less service to her saintly than to her military reputation. We may examine, in company with Captain Marin, the Maid's last months of active service.

After Easter, 1430, Joan's own desire was to go into the Isle of France, and renew her attack on Paris. For this, at least, we have her own statement at her trial, March 3rd, 1431.² She was asked whether her "counsel"

¹ See *Jeanne d'Arc, Tacticienne et Stratégiste*, par Paul Marin, Capitaine d'Artillerie. Paris, 1889-90.

² Quicherat, *Procès*, i. 109.

bade her attack La Charité, where she failed for lack of supplies. She made no answer as to her "counsel" or "voices"; she said that she herself wished to go into France, but that the captains told her it would be better first to attack La Charité.¹ Thwarted in her wish, whether that wish was or was not suggested mystically, Joan made an attempt on Pont-l'Evêque, where she was defeated by the stout resistance of a handful of English, and she made another effort by way of Soissons, in which she was frustrated by treachery. The object of both movements was to cut off the communications of the Duke of Burgundy by seizing a bridge on the Oise, and thus to prevent him from besieging Compiègne. That city, at the time as large as Orleans, had been many times besieged and sacked. It had yielded amicably to the Maid in August, 1429, and the burghers were determined to be true to their king for the future. The place was of immense importance for the possession of Paris, and Joan hurried to rescue it so soon as she heard of the siege. The question is, did she try to animate the citizens by a false tale of a revelation through St. Catherine, and, at her trial did she quibble in her answers to questions on this matter?

The topic of dates is important. Joan says that she made her sortie, in which she was captured, on the afternoon of the day when she had entered Compiègne at dawn. This promptitude was in accordance with her character, and her system of striking swiftly. Her friend, de Cagny, is in the same tale; her enemies, the Burgundian chroniclers, put the interval of a whole day between her entry into Compiègne and her sally.

The first witness is Enguerran de Monstrelet, a retainer of that Judas, Jean de Luxembourg, who sold the

¹ After Easter, 1430, when her "voices" daily predicted her capture, the Maid generally accepted such plans as the generals preferred, distrusting her own judgment. So she said in her trial, on March 14, 1431.

Maid for ten thousand francs. In or about 1424 Monstrelet himself had robbed on the highway some peaceable merchants of Abbeville.² Now just before the affair of Compiègne, Joan had defeated and taken a robber Burgundian chief, Franquet d'Arras. She wished to exchange him for a prisoner of her own party, but her man died. The magistrates of Senlis and Lagny claimed Franquet as, by his own confession, a traitor, robber, and murderer. He had a trial of fifteen days, and was executed; Joan did not interfere with the course of such justice as he got. In one sense Franquet's position was that of Joan in English hands. But he was a robber; she always stopped pillage. She was sold by Luxembourg; he was not sold by Joan. However, Monstrelet, himself a convicted robber, says (like the other Burgundians) that Joan cruelly condemned Franquet to death. The chivalrous highwaymen stood by each other. If a knight was to be punished for theft and murder, the profession of arms was in an ill way. Joan's deposition before her judges as to Franquet d'Arras is a model of straightforward boldness:³ "I consented to his death, if he had deserved it, as by his own confession he was a traitor, robber, and murderer."

We can now estimate the impartiality of Monstrelet, a Burgundian *routier*, writing about the foe of pillage and of pillagers. Even he dares not stain his chronicle with the sale of Joan by his master Jean de Luxembourg. But he was outside Compiègne when Joan was taken, and should have known the dates. He did not, however, begin his history till ten years after the events.⁴

The question of dates may be summed up briefly. The Burgundian chroniclers give Joan two days in Compiègne, and fix her capture on May 24th. De Cagny also dates it on the same day. But the Duke of

² Quicherat, *Procès*, iv., 360.

³ *Procès*, i., 158.

⁴ *Procès*, iv., 360, namely after 1440.

Burgundy, writing to announce the taking of the Maid, an hour after that event, dates his letter May 23rd. This is conclusive, for the other authorities wrote many years after the occurrence. Again, William of Worcester gives the date of the Maiden's capture as May 23rd.¹ So far, we have reason to trust the accuracy of Joan rather than that of her enemies.

It is obvious, however, that Joan might have passed two days in Compiègne, as the Burgundian writers allege, yet might have delivered no speech about St. Catherine; just as she might conceivably have found time for such a speech in a single day. To understand the evidence for this speech, and indeed for all the incidents of her last sally, it is necessary to explain the situation of Compiègne. Here for the first part of the problem we follow Quicherat.²

Compiègne is on the left bank of the Oise. A long fortified bridge, with a rampart, connects it with the right bank. The rampart was guarded by a fosse, crossed by a *pont dormant*, which, I suppose, could not be raised like a drawbridge, though there are tales about "raising the drawbridge." On the right bank is a meadow, about a mile broad, walled in by *la côte de Picardie*. The plain being flat, and often flooded, a causeway leads from the bridge across the meadow. Three steeples are in sight, those of Margny at the end of the causeway, of Clairoix two miles and a half distant, and of Venette about a mile and a half away to the left. The Burgundians had a camp at Margny and another at Clairoix; the English lay at Venette; the Duke of Burgundy was at Coudun, a league away, says Monstrelet. According to M. Quicherat, Joan's plan was to carry Margny and then Clairoix, and finally attack the Duke of Burgundy himself. Now it was five in the evening when Joan rode through the gate, and past the fatal rampart that guarded the bridge.

¹ Cited by Quicherat, *Procès*, iv., 475.

² *Appercus Nouveau*, p. 55; Paris, 1850.

Captain Marin justly remarks (i., 176), that to attack Margny was feasible; it might be surprised, and its capture, cutting the Burgundians, was important; to attack Clairoix, at three times the distance, where the troops would have full warning, was an absurd blunder; to charge through the Burgundians at both places, and assail the Duke himself, was a very wild project, with a handful of men, only five or six hundred. Believing, as he does, in Joan's tactics, he supposes that she merely meant to take and hold Margny, and so cut the Burgundians off from the English. With this purpose she moved late in the day, that the English, in their efforts to rejoin the Burgundians, might be baffled by the dark of night. If Joan had a larger scheme, she chose her hour ill, and, we may add, she had an inadequate force.

Let us now hear what the Burgundian historians have to say as to Joan's speech in Compiègne before the sally. First, Monstrelet, who was present at Coudun where Joan was taken before the Duke on May 23rd, says—nothing at all! Next we have Lefèvre de Saint-Rémi, who was sixty-seven when he began to write his *Mémoires* in 1460, thirty years after the events; he was King-at-Arms of the Burgundian Order of the Fleece of Gold. M. Quicherat praises his account of the sortie, as among the best and most complete. Lefèvre declares that the Maid was in Compiègne for two nights and a day, and on the second day publicly announced that she had a revelation from St. Catherine, assuring her that she would discomfit the Burgundians. She had the gates closed, she assembled the people, she cried that, "God, through St. Catherine, bade her sally out *that day*, that she would defeat the enemy, and capture, slay, or drive in rout the Duke and all his men, and that this was indubitable. About two o'clock the Maid sallied forth. . . ." To ourselves it is plain that, in the opinion of Lefèvre, and of Chastellain (to be

quoted next), Joan announced the defeat and capture of the Duke for that day : "Qu'elle yssist ce jour allen-contre de ses ennemis et qu'elle desconfiroit le duc ; et seroit pris de sa personne." That she should issue forth *that day*, against her foes, and that she would defeat the Duke, who, for his part, would be taken prisoner ; these are clearly meant as immediate, not remote, results of the sally. If Joan made these predictions, she cannot have meant merely to hold Margny ; and so Captain Marin's praise of her strategy is misapplied. He can only take refuge in a denial that the capture was prophesied *for that day*.

Either M. Marin, therefore, is wrong in his estimate of the Maid's strategy, or this account of her prophecy is incorrect. The Maid, we conceive, is to catch or kill the Duke *that day*. Now any attempt at such a feat, with such a force as Joan's, was mere recklessness, far beyond her gallant and resolute charge at Orleans in 1429. The Duke was a league away with all his army ; between him and her lay Clairoix, Margny, and the Burgundian detachments there. The idea was less than feasible, as Captain Marin perceives.¹

The next evidence is that of George Chastellain. To this accomplished rhetorician Lefèvre sent the memoirs which he began in 1460. These Chastellain used ; he had also Monstrelet before him ; had he other sources ? Quicherat thought he had no personal knowledge of Joan's last year. Pontus Heuterus (1583) says that Chastellain claims to have seen Joan several times. Captain Marin reposes great faith in Chastellain, because he is called *elegans et exactus*, and because of the well-merited praise given to the style of the official Burgundian historiographer. Captain Marin also lays stress on Chastellain's fine description of "the end of the glory of the Maid" (already quoted) as a proof of his fairness. Now we venture to hold

¹ I., 170, 171. "Il paraît difficile d'admettre l'accomplissement de ce troisième point."

that the differences between Chastellain's version and those of Lefèvre and Monstrelet, are mainly differences of style. By a curious coincidence the present writer, in an account of Joan's last sally, hit on the same piece of rhetoric as Chastellain himself, without having read that author. Chastellain was a writer aiming of set purpose at a style ; the other chroniclers were plain men.

Chastellain, then, says that the Maid entered Compiègne by night. She herself says that she entered "at the secret hour of morning." He adds, that after having rested there two nights (that of her entry and the next), the second day after she proclaimed certain *folles fantommeries* (wild spectral foolings.) She told the people that, by revelation of God through St. Catherine, "He wished her *that very day* to take up arms, and go forth to fight the King's enemies, English and Burgundians, and that without doubt she would discomfit them, and the Duke of Burgundy would be taken, and most of his people slain and routed." Then the whole multitude, "all who could carry clubs," went out with her at four in the afternoon, five hundred men-at-arms in all.

This, on the face of it, is absurd. If all who could carry clubs went out, it is odd that Monstrelet says nothing of such a strange levy *en masse*. Probably the five hundred were men-at-arms, exclusive of the mob. That mob, men and women, did sally later, after Joan was taken, and carried a Burgundian redoubt.

To our mind, Chastellain writes as a rhetorician, certainly in his phrase, "*tout ce qui povit porter bastons*," and probably in his account of the *fantommeries* about St. Catherine, and the prophecy of taking the Duke captive. He has adopted these from Lefèvre, adding his own decorations, and Lefèvre wrote twenty years after Monstrelet, who wrote ten years after the event, but never said a word of these facts. Thus we regard Chastellain's

theory of Joan's two days in Compiègne and his date (May 24th) as wholly wrong, contradicted both by Joan and by the letter of the Duke of Burgundy. His tale of a military mob is peculiarly his own; his *fantommeries* are an improvement in sarcastic force on Lefèvre, and that is all.

On this question of *fantommeries* we now turn to Joan's own evidence, given on March 10th, 1431. As to the value of her evidence, in general, we must remember that she refused to depone on oath to matters "not connected with the trial, or with the Catholic faith." Her reasons were, first that she had a certain secret in common with the King; next, that her voices and visions were sacred things to her; even among friends she spoke of them, as Dunois attests, with a blush, and in no detail. Now on the King's secret and on her voices Joan was plied with endless questions, she, being but a girl, nearly starved, (it was in Lent) and weakened by long captivity in irons. Finally, as to the secret sign which she gave the King, she told an obvious parable, or allegory, intentionally mixing up the real event at Chinon, in March or April, 1429, with the scene of the coronation at Rheims three months later. This innocent, and indeed open allegory she later confessed to as a mere parable, if we may trust Martin L'Advenu, the priest who heard her last confession. When set face to face with the rack, she announced that they might tear her limb from limb, but she would not speak, or, if she did, she would instantly contradict whatever might be wrung from her.¹ In her trial, when vexed with these endless questions, she kept replying, "Do you wish me to perjure myself?" To reveal the King's secret would have been to reveal his doubts of his own legitimacy, and not one word on this point was wrung from Joan. For herself, she "openly laid bare her conscience," says Quicherat, made a clean

breast of it, as we have seen in her reply about the death of Franquet d'Arras. This is a brief account of Joan as a witness, necessary for the understanding of her evidence about Compiègne. Does she confess to any *fantommeries* there? The fact is that she never was asked if she made a speech at Compiègne.

She was asked on March 10th, "Did you make your sally by advice of your 'voices'?" Her answer, if not categorical, is touching. "In Easter week last, she standing above the fosse of Melun, her voices, the voices of St. Catherine and St. Margaret, told her that she would be taken prisoner before the feast of St. John, and that so it must be, and she was not to be amazed, but bear it with good will, and that God would be her aid." And later, "many a time, and almost daily," she had the same message, but she knew not the day or the hour. Had she known that day and that hour, she said, she would not have gone to Compiègne. Asked whether she would have gone had the voices bidden her and told her also that she would be taken, she said that she would not have gone gladly, but assuredly she would have gone, "would have obeyed, whatever might happen." On that evil day of Compiègne, "*non habuit aliud preceptum de exeundo*, she had no other monition about the sally," except the constant warning of her capture. Nevertheless, in the judges' summary of her guilt, they declare that at Compiègne she made promises and predictions, saying that she "knew by revelation many things that never occurred."²

Are we to accept the word of Joan, or the word of her murderers? Probably they had some gossip to go on. There was no confronting or cross examination of witnesses. Into Compiègne the judges could hardly send persons to collect evidence. Can the evidence have been that of her Master of the Household, D'Aulon, of her brother, or of Pothon le Pour-

¹ *Procès*, I., 400.

² *Procès*, I., 298.

guignon, who were all taken with her? It is to be noted that Jean de Mailly, Bishop of Noyon, and Jean Dacier, Abbé of Saint Corneille, priests of the English party, were in Compiègne, it is said, at the time of Joan's sortie, and afterwards sat among her judges. They may have told a distorted tale to her discredit.¹

Captain Marin inclines to think that Chastellain is correct with his *fantommeries*, whether his theory of a two days' stay in Compiègne is right or not (ii. 58). If Joan was daily told by spiritual voices that she would be taken, is it likely, the Captain asks, that she would have run the risk? He thinks it improbable; he underrates Joan's courage. Captain Marin never notices, we think, in this connection a piece of coincident evidence. In the height of her triumph, between the rescue of Orleans and the crowning at Rheims, in the summer of 1429, the Duc d'Alençon sometimes heard Joan tell the King that "she would last but one year, or little more and therefore he must employ her while he might."² D'Alençon gave this evidence on oath in 1456. Now Joan's year was over in Easter week 1430; there remained the "little more." In Easter week her voices first told her that she would soon be taken. Granting her habit of hearing voices, granting her belief, now of a year's standing at least, that she had but one year for her mission, she was bound to receive, or think that she received, mystical warnings of her coming end. She says she did receive them; it is certain that she knew her year was over, yet she never shrank from any danger. Hence there is no contradiction between her warnings and her facing constant risks. As to the nature of her voices we have nothing to say. It is absolutely certain that her prophecy of her wound at Orleans was made, and was recorded, in a dispatch from

a Flemish Ambassador, three weeks before it occurred.³ She had, therefore, reason to trust her premonitions, but they never made her shun a fight.

Thus considered, Joan's sally was not inconsistent with what she said about her voices, but was consistent with and worthy of her character. Captain Marin lays stress on her parable about the King and the crown, as a proof of a certain pardonable shiftiness. But on that one point, the King's secret, Joan many a time gave her tormentors fair warning. She would not speak, or, if she spoke, she would not speak the truth. As to the voices at Compiègne, that was another question.

Thus we believe that, except as to the King's secret, where she gave her judges due and repeated warning, and except in cases where she declined to answer, Joan was frank about her voices. At Compiègne, if she made a speech at all, she probably announced success, as generals ought to do, and she may also have appealed to her many previous victories, and to herself as heaven-sent, such being her belief. That she pretended to a new, explicit, direct promise from St. Catherine of the capture of the Duke, we deny. There is no evidence for the belief; the question was never put to her at all. Naturally she did not mention to her followers her subjective certainty of being taken before St. John's day; she knew not the day and the hour, and she could not discourage her men.

Captain Marin, on the other hand (and here is our quarrel with him), says (iv. 293), "If we consider the events at Compiègne in the light of the various chronicles and documents cited and analysed by us, it is permissible to admit that Joan had entertained her men-at-arms, and the people of Compiègne, with the most

¹ Sorel, *La Prise de Jeanne d'Arc*, p. 179. Paris, 1889.

² *Procès*, iii. 99.

³ See Quicherat, *Apperçus Nouveaux*, p. 76. This and some similar facts cannot be disputed, says Quicherat, without destroying the whole basis of the history of the time.

magnificent promises of victory. The Maid had assured them that the Duke of Burgundy and his army were a spoil offered to their prowess. This promise Joan never received from her voices . . . she did not announce it formally as an echo of her veritable revelations, but, doubtless, said that on the morning of the sally, she had monitions from her 'counsel' as to the means for securing the victory." Now, at her trial, she denied that she had any "monition." If we agree with Captain Marin, on one occasion or other Joan deserted truth.

She habitually used her "counsel," we think, as synonymous with her "voices." There may be traces, in a conversation reported twenty-five years later by D'Aulon, of distinctions in her own theory of her inspiration. About this point Captain Marin writes at considerable length, and in terms of algebra. But if Joan really said, "To-day the Duke is yours, to-day I have advice of my counsel," her men would inevitably believe that she announced an explicit prophecy, like that about her wound at Orleans. Consequently Joan quibbled, to put it mildly, and this we do not believe. At most, if she made the speech which Monstrelet does not report, and about which she was not asked a question, she may have been misunderstood.

Thus, if Lefèvre and Chastellain are right, if Joan promised to bring the Duke of Burgundy back a captive to Compiègne, it is all over with her fame as a tactician which Captain Marin is proclaiming. If their dates are correct, they writing long after the event, the Duke of Burgundy, writing on the day of the event, was wrong. They give particulars, long after the fact, about *fantommeries*, of which Monstrelet, an earlier and better witness, says nothing. On this point they contradict Joan's own evidence, *non habuit aliud praeceptum de exeundo*, or they aver that, if she spoke truly at Rouen, she spoke falsely at Compiègne. As to Joan's evidence about her daily fears of captivity, they are not in-

consistent with her daring, they are in perfect agreement with D'Alençon's statement about her "one year," and the veracity of her testimony on this point is not invalidated by her allegory about the sign shown to the King. It is unfortunate, perhaps suspicious, that the witnesses in the trial of Rehabilitation (1450-56) say little or nothing about Compiègne. For the rest, we must choose between Joan's evidence and that of some unknown persons who were probably examined in the interests of her accusers.

If Joan really contemplated such afeat as the capture of the Duke, we may take it for granted that she also really had a "monition." Her essential characteristic, as Michelet says, was *le bon sens dans l'exaltation*. Of her own head she never would have made such a wild attempt, and Captain Marin must either give up his theory of her strategic skill, or his Chastellain and Lefèvre. The captain tries, by an algebraical study of Joan's theory of inspiration, to save her character for frank honesty. The *advocatus diaboli* will little regard his system of mystical equations, which contains too many unknown quantities. The *advocatus diaboli* must choose between Joan's word and mere current gossip, backed by two comparatively late "synoptic" and inaccurate chroniclers, one of them a confirmed rhetorician, and by the decision of the judges at Rouen. But that has already been annulled by the Inquisition itself, in the trial of Rehabilitation (1450-1456). We must remember, story for story, that, in 1498, two very old men of Compiègne told how, in the church of St. Jacques there, they heard Joan say to a company of children whom she loved: "My children and dear friends, I do you to wit that I am sold and betrayed, and soon will be delivered to death. Pray God for me, I pray you, for never shall I have power more to help the King and kingdom of France." So the old men reported, one being aged ninety-eight and one eighty-six, to the author of

*Le Miroir des Femmes Vertueuses.*¹ And though, as Captain Marin says, Joan was no whiner, we think the story of this sudden burst of feeling in presence of a great company of children as likely a tale as that of Chastellain. Even when at Rheims, we know, she had "feared nothing but treachery."

One other point is most notable. Chastellain and Lefèvre make Joan brag about St. Catherine. Now, in all the accounts of Joan and of her mission, written *before* her trial, not one single word is said about St. Catherine, St. Margaret, or St. Michael. They are never once named, *before* her trial, as the sources of her inspiration. It is certain, on her own evidence, that she spoke of them to her ecclesiastical examiners at Poitiers before she was accepted (March, 1429). These clerics seem to have kept her cherished secret, for to the best of our knowledge, not one of her early lay critics knew that she was in relations with these saints. That only came out at her trial. Is it likely, then, that she made a public speech about her so secret belief? It is incredible.

Was Joan betrayed at Compiègne by Flavy the captain of the town, a man certainly of ill character and of an evil end, but one who held Compiègne stoutly for the King? Quicherat thought the charge unfounded; Captain Marin thinks it extremely probable, if not certain; his verdict at best is "not proven."

The descriptions of Joan's last fight vary considerably, and the modern historians have generally made up their tale by selecting at pleasure from the discrepant accounts. We have Joan's own brief and simple version: we have that of her friend Perceval de Cagny; and we have the synoptic statements of Monstrelet, Lefèvre, and Chastellain. De Cagny was not present, and probably he was on the marches of Normandy with D'Alençon.

¹ *Procès*, iv., 268. Probably these remarks, if made at all, were made on an earlier occasion.

His account contains some points which are certainly erroneous; on the other hand, his most remarkable statement is in accordance with a reply made by Joan at her trial, and is probably based on the evidence of an actual spectator. Monstrelet, as we know, was at Coudun, a league away from Compiègne, and, though he wrote at least ten years later, and was as subject as other men to the illusions of memory, he is a fairly good witness. Lefèvre wrote much later, and Chastellain, still later, worked on a four-fold basis of Lefèvre, Monstrelet, personal recollections, and rhetorical ambition.

Joan herself, when asked whether she crossed the bridge at Compiègne (did they suppose that she flew or swam?) answered that she crossed the bridge, passed the rampart, and went with her force against the men of Jean of Luxembourg (at Margny) and drove them twice or thrice as far as the camp of the Burgundians, and, in the third charge, *usque ad medium itineris*. This appears to mean a charge, made in the retreat of Joan, by which she repelled her pursuers on the causeway across the meadow. "And then the English who came up cut off the path of Joan and her men, and she, retreating, was taken in the fields, on the Picardy side, near the bridge-rampart: and between the spot where she was taken and Compiègne were the banks of the river, and the rampart itself, with its fosse, and nothing else." That is all. Joan says not a word of treason. If treason there were, even if she did not notice the facts, she would have heard of them from D'Aulon, who remained with her for some time after her capture. But, if treason there were, and if she knew it, Joan was not the girl to complain of false friends in the face of her enemies.

We turn to Perceval de Cagny, writing in 1436, and first printed from the MS. by Quicherat. Very late on the 23rd of May (we have discussed this erroneous date) Joan made a mid-

night march from Crépy to Compiègne. Her own company of volunteers mustered some three or four hundred lances. If so, what becomes of the multitude of men-at-arms drawn to her in Compiègne by her *fantommeries*? Her whole force of men-at-arms in her sally was but five hundred men, according to Chastellain. Then her reported speech gained for her only one or two hundred men.

De Cagny says that the Burgundians knew of Joan's secret arrival, expected an attack, and set an ambush. The Burgundian writers implicitly deny this, averring that no sally was expected. They are probably right. Skirmishing was going on, de Cagny says, when the Maid heard of it, and at nine in the morning sallied forth. This is certainly incorrect. She charged the Burgundians, and the ambushed force intercepted her retreat. Her men told her to gallop back, or all would be lost. In wrath she answered : "Silence! You can defeat them; think only of charging." They turned her horse's head and forced her homewards. The Burgundians and English (from Venette) hurried to the rampart of the bridge. The captain of the town, Flavy, seeing the enemy about to rush on his bridge, feared to lose the place, and had the drawbridge raised and the gate shut. The Maid was alone among a multitude of foes. They rushed on her, and seized her bridle, each crying, " Surrender to me, and give me your faith!" She said, " I have given my faith to another than you, and I will keep my oath to him." She was then dragged to the quarters of Jean de Luxembourg, at Clairoix, who afterwards sold her.

In all this the last words are probably true. When Joan, at Rouen, was offered freedom from her irons if she would pledge her faith, give her parole as we say, not to attempt an escape, she declined. " *Quia nulli unquam fidem dederat* (for to no man at any time had she pledged her faith)." ¹

¹ *Procès*, i., p. 47.

Captain Marin dwells on the many cases in which kings, as John of France and Francis the First, and warriors like Talbot, did plight their faith to a captor, that they might escape death on the field. Joan yielded to no man. She confessed that, when daily warned of her capture by her voices, she prayed that she might die in that hour.¹ Manifestly then, she refused to yield her parole of deliberate purpose, in hope to be slain. That must have been her fixed determination. Later, in disobedience to her voices, she leaped from the top of the high tower of Beaurevoir. Her desire was, either to escape and rescue Compiègne, or to " trust her soul to God, rather than her body to the English." Of such mettle was the Maid; equivocators are fashioned in other material. Joan's own words, spoken to Cauchon, " I never gave my faith to any man," confirm the statement of de Cagny.

Monstrelet makes Joan first attack Margny, where Baudo de Noyelle had his quarters. Jean de Luxembourg and some captains had ridden over from Clairoix on a friendly visit. The noise of battle roused the other Burgundians, and the English at Venette. After fierce fighting, the French, outnumbered, began to retreat, the Maid in the rear, doing her uttermost for her men. " In the end, as I was informed, the Maid was dragged from her horse by an archer, near whom was the Bastard of Wandonne, to whom she yielded and gave her faith." Monstrelet adds that the English had " never feared any captain, nor other chief in war, as they feared the Maid." There is here no word of treason, or of closed gates. The Bastard of Wandonne claimed the Maid, and so doubtless arose the tale that she surrendered to him.

Lefèvre de Saint Rémi wrote at the age of sixty-seven in 1460. In addition to what we have already quoted from him, he tells us that Joan rode " a right goodly charger,

¹ *Procès*, i., 115.

with a rich *heuque*, or overcloth, of cloth of red gold." Chastellain adds that the horse was *lyart*, gray.¹ "She had all the men-at-arms in Compiègne with her," which seems unlikely, especially if we can here trust de Cagny. This point, however, if correctly given, is an important one in favour of Flavy. How could he make a sortie and rescue the Maid, if he had no men-at-arms? Margny was surprised, but was reinforced. The French began to retreat; many were taken, slain, or drowned in Oise. In the rear the Maid, behind all her party, sustained the fray, and was taken by one of the Count of Ligny's men (Jean de Luxembourg's), with her brother and her Master of the Household D'Aulon.

Nothing is said here about closing the gates, or about treachery. Chastellain, after his remarks on Joan's *fantommeries* and army of club-men, mentions her harness, her cloth of gold, her gray charger, her bearing, "like a captain leading a great army," her standard floating in the wind. Still expanding, he mentions Baudo de Noyelle and the knights from Clairoix, who, he says, came all unarmed, but, it seems, had hardly reached Margny when the fray began. "There was the Maid broken into the camp, and she began to kill and overthrow men right proudly, as if all had been her own." Thereon the knights from Clairoix sent for their harness, and summoned their forces. There was charge and counter-charge; the fight wavered dubious; even from Coudun reinforcements came, but the Burgundians were already driving the French in orderly retreat towards Compiègne. Then the Maid "did great deeds, passing the nature of women," as we have already heard, but an archer, vexed at seeing a girl bear herself so boldly, tore her from her

¹ "The Dinlay snaws were ne'er sae white
As the *lyart* locks o' Harden's hair,"

says the ballad of *Jamie Telfer*. The word *lyart* is also used of a Covenanters' horse in the year of Bothwell Bridge.

horse by her rich saddle cloth. She gave her faith to the Bastard of Wandonne, "for that he called himself *noble homme*." The French retreated, and we heard not a word about closing the gates.

Here, then, we have silence as to treacherous or unlucky closing of the gates and lifting of the drawbridge on the part of Joan, of Monsstrelet, of Lefèvre, and of Chastellain. The circumstance is only mentioned by de Cagny (who is mistaken on every point, except probably on Joan's refusal to surrender,) and by local tradition at Compiègne, in 1498. M. Sorel (p. 294) also says that in 1444, in a lawsuit, an advocate accused Flavy of selling Joan for many ingots of gold! He cites *Bulletin de la Soc. de l'Histoire de France*, 1861, p. 176. Tradition at Compiègne made Flavy sell Joan to the English, which is simply absurd. There is also a *Mémoire* on Flavy, "which may date from the time of Henri II."¹ It is certainly not earlier than 1509, as it mentions a document of that year. After some account of Flavy's captaincy of the town as nominal lieutenant of the royal favourite La Trémouille, the writer of the *Mémoire* describes the headlong flight of the French to the barriers, that is the most external fortification of the bridge, the Maid guarding the rear. But for the archers in boats, who received most of the foot-soldiers, "The foe would have occupied the barriers and endangered the town, wherein were only the inhabitants, who, with the Captain, stopped the fury of the enemy" Did he stop them by raising the drawbridge? Nothing is said about this. The Maid was dragged down by her long skirts, and gave her word to Wandonne.

After this simple statement of the best contemporary evidence, and of the later charges against Flavy, we see that de Cagny is the only early authority for the shutting of the gates, while the charges of treason do not

¹ Quicherat, *Procès*, v. 173.

occur till many years after the event, except in the mouth of a hostile barrister. Jean Chartier, writing after 1450, merely remarks that, "some say the barrier was shut, others that the press was too great."

In face of the records it is really hardly worth while to discuss Captain Marin's long and erudite charge against Flavy. Joan, it is true, was eternally thwarted by La Trémouille and the Archbishop of Rheims; the latter, after her capture, wrote a letter in which he says that God has punished her for her presumption. To the eternal shame of France no attempt was made to rescue or to ransom her. She may have made herself unpopular with robber-captains by consenting to the death of Franquet d'Arras; but D'Alençon, Dunois, Xaintrailles, were not robber-captains. The men-at-arms may have murmured at her dislike of their leaguer-lasses. The Court was glad to be rid of her. But that Flavy, to please the Archbishop of Rheims, or La Trémouille, or Jean de Luxembourg, or the English, or in spite, or to keep all the glory of saving Compiègne for himself, deliberately betrayed Joan, is a charge difficult to believe. No fewer than six alternative motives for his treason are alleged. If Flavy was, as is asserted, a tyrant, robber, and violator, Joan was not likely to be on the best terms with him. But the more he was detested the more would myths to his discredit be circulated. Cagny, the only early evidence for the shut gates, does not hint at treachery. On the whole, it is more probable than not, on the face of the evidence, that the gates were not shut at all. Captain Marin conceives that only a few Burgundians, perhaps two dozen, were about Joan, that only a few could never have carried the barrier, that they, even if they had entered the boulevard or redoubt at the bridge-head, could not have held it, the gorge being towards the bridge and the town, and so they were not really dangerous and there was no need of shutting the gates. Again, only a

small force of English or Burgundians could charge, the causeway not affording room. So he thinks that Flavy had no reason for anxiety; he should have made a sortie, and kept the gates open, till he had rescued the Maid, and then dispatched her pursuers at leisure.

But we do not know for a fact that the gates were ever shut; we do not learn that any drawbridge was raised. We do know that the boats were rescuing foot-soldiers. We are told that *all* the garrison was out with Joan; who then was to make the sortie? As to the "two dozen Burgundians," Joan herself said that the *English* cut off her retreat. M. Sorel accepts this and blames Flavy for not having checked the English advance by his guns on the walls. Englishmen are not always easily stopped; the *Mémoire* says that they could not be stopped. We learn that Joan came up last of all, with her brother, D'Aulon, Pothon, and her chaplain, who, though he showed little nerve at her trial, stood by her in fight. We fancy a frantic crowd at the barriers, men flying madly, pursuing furiously, a moving mass wedged tight by fear and rage. Joan comes up last; she cannot make her way through the serried throng; a rush of foemen sweeps her into an angle between the redoubt and the wall, she is dragged from her horse, and all is over. There may have been, perhaps there was, a moment when, through the panic-stricken tide of men, Flavy might have led a sortie, if he had fresh men-at-arms by him, which, as we have seen, some chroniclers deny. We cannot tell. In a second of some strange blankness of resolve the *Victoria* was lost; it may have been so with Flavy; nothing can be known. Why devote volumes to the task of adding, by dint of mutually exclusive theories, another Ganelon to the history of France?

When Joan leaped from the tower of Beaurevoir she was stunned, though not otherwise hurt. Her first thought was for Compiègne, where she had

heard that the people were to be massacred. She said to St. Catherine and St. Margaret, "Will God let these good folk die, who are ever so loyal to their King?" Then she was comforted by St. Catherine, who bade her repent of her leap, promising that Compiègne should be rescued by Martinmas, and thereupon "she began to recover, and to take food, and straightway was she healed."¹ Compiègne was rescued, as St. Catherine promised, and we certainly do not envy the acuteness of the critic who may allege that the Maid forged the prediction after the event.²

¹ *Procès*, i., 151, 152.

² In 1459 Cardinal Jouffroy, in a letter to Pius the Second, sneered elaborately at the Maid. The French, he says, "*Testimonio Cesaris, rem auditam pro comperta facile habent.*" Captain Marin (iv., 187) translates "*testimonio Cesaris,*" "*par la complicité royale.*" Joan was believed in "by the complicity of the King" Charles the

Such was Joan of Arc: her last thought was for herself, her first for Compiègne. Yet the people of Compiègne, writing to the King on May 26th, have not a word of sorrow for the capture of the Maid, do not even mention the terrible event then but three days old.³ Even her modern admirer hesitates as to whether she did not make a bragging speech about the secret of her soul, St. Catherine, whom she seems never to have mentioned in private to her dearest friends. Is it irreverent to say of Joan of Arc, "She came to her own, and her own received her not"?

A. LANG.

Seventh! Jouffroy of course says nothing here about Charles the Seventh, who was not Emperor. He is quoting Caius Julius Cesar (*De Bello Gallico*, iv. 5.), on the general credulity of the Gauls.

³ Sorel, in *La Prise de Jeanne d'Arc*; quoted by Captain Marin iv., 283, 284.

